

Islamists lose election in Gaza

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (R) — Muslim fundamentalists lost professional association elections in the Israeli-occupied Gaza Strip to nationalist supporters of the PLO for the second time in two weeks, Palestinian sources said Saturday. Candidates identified with the Palestine Liberation Organisation won nine out of 11 seats in elections to the board of the Gaza Medical Association held on Friday, the sources said. The two remaining seats went to candidates identified with the Islamist Hamas movement. Professional association elections are the only polls Israel allows in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip. They are considered the barometers of political sentiment. Candidates identified with Hamas, which opposes Middle East peace talks, have lost two Gaza elections since Arab-Israeli negotiations were launched in Madrid last October. Nationalists won all but three of 16 seats in elections to the Gaza Strip Chamber of Commerce in November. Last week they took five of nine seats on the Gaza Engineers Association board.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية تصدر بالانجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية «الراي»

Bilaterals may be delayed to Feb. 17

AMMAN (J.T.) — The fourth round of Arab-Israeli bilateral talks, which have been widely expected to take place in Washington between Feb. 10 and Feb. 23, is now likely to start a week later, on Feb. 17, according to a Palestinian delegate. "The Israelis have informed the U.S. State Department they will go to Washington for the new round, but not on Feb. 10, according to my information," the delegate said speaking on condition of anonymity. "It seems the Israelis want a new date just to assert their independent decision-making," the delegate said. "It is also possible the step is related to their electioneering." Asked whether the Jordanian side heard about the news, a senior member of the Jordanian delegation said: "No. As far as we are concerned, the date is still Feb. 10."

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Turkish snowslides kill 109

DIYARBAKIR, Turkey (R) — Avalanches hit remote villages in southeast Turkey on Saturday, killing at least 109 people, including 99 paramilitary gendarmes, and burying more than 250 civilians, officials said.

Sudan rebels surrender in Central African Republic

BANGUI (R) — More than 100 Sudanese rebels fleeing battle with Sudan's army have surrendered to authorities in the Central African Republic, Public Security Minister Ismail Nimaga said. Speaking on state radio on Friday night, Mr. Nimaga said the guerrillas were members of the Popular Liberation Army of Southern Sudan led by John Garang. They appeared to have suffered heavy casualties, he added.

Egyptian judge recommends street execution

CAIRO (R) — An Egyptian judge has sentenced a convicted drug dealer to death with a recommendation that as an experiment he should be hanged outside a youth club where he was caught. Judge Gamal Abdul Halim said in an interview published on Saturday that Farouq Yassin should be executed outside the youth club but on a scaffold blocked from public view.

Egypt blocked attack on Libya — Mubarak

CAIRO (R) — President Hosni Mubarak said in remarks published on Saturday that Egyptian intervention saved Libya from a Western military strike over charges of Libyan backing for international terrorism. "Egypt has tried and is still trying to contain the Libyan crisis. Egyptian intervention has indeed saved Libya from a military strike that had already been decided," Cairo's Al Gomhouria newspaper quoted him as saying. He did not elaborate.

Snow storm hits Syria

DAMASCUS (R) — Overnight snowfall blocked roads in several parts of Syria but promised a good agricultural season, meteorological and agricultural sources said on Saturday. Drifts up to three metres formed in mountain areas. The highway to the Lebanese capital, Beirut, was closed. Mount Qassayn, which overlooks Damascus, was capped with snow for several hours on Saturday morning.

Kuwait begins voter registration

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwait began registering voters for a parliamentary election on Saturday but few people turned up because of a Muslim public holiday, witnesses said. Polling to restore Kuwait's parliament, dissolved in 1986 amid security concerns over the Iran-Iraq war, is planned for October. Interior ministry officials toured registration centres for Kuwait's 25 constituencies early on Saturday.

44 killed in China bus crash

BEIJING (AP) — An overcrowded bus tumbled 76 metres down a mountain slope, killing 44 people and injuring 25, an official newspaper reported Saturday. The Wen Hui Bao said 74 people were aboard the bus, which was travelling to Xiyang county, in southwest China's Sichuan province. The driver was unable to negotiate a sharp turn in the mountain road, and the bus tumbled down the mountainside.

Rare heavy snowfall in Tokyo

TOKYO (AP) — Tokyo's heaviest snowfall in six years fell Saturday, cutting power lines, blocking roads and airport runways and leaving scores of fallen pedestrians hospitalised with broken bones.

Habash arrives in Tunis

By Mariam M. Shahin
with agency dispatches

AMMAN — Palestinian leader George Habash arrived in Tunis early Saturday evening, ending a brief detention in France which threatened to develop into a political crisis. The 64-year-old head of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), was held under virtual house arrest in the Henry Dunant Hospital, where he was to receive medical treatment, since late Thursday, after a political furor arose over his presence in France.

The French Justice Ministry lifted a custody order on Dr. Habash at 2 a.m. Saturday after attempting to interrogate him failed.

Dr. Habash, who was accompanied by his wife Helda, was met at the Tunis airport by Palestine Liberation Organisation Chairman Yasser Arafat. PLO sources in Tunis said Dr. Habash, 64, had been taken to a private PLO residence.

A PFLP official in Damascus, where the group is based, also said Dr. Habash had arrived in the Tunisian capital.

Dr. Habash, whose group carried out a series of hijacking in the 1960s and 1970s, left Paris in a light aircraft sent from Algiers.

He originally flew to France from Tunis amid reports that he had suffered a cerebral stroke. He quickly found himself caught up in a political imbroglio with the French opposition, the Jewish community and Israel expressing outrage at his presence. His stay in France forced the resignation of four senior government officials.

He left amid tight security involving "fake departures" from the hospital where he was undergoing tests, and with three or four destinations being cited — Algeria, Syria, Tunisia and Jordan.

In Paris, photographers watching through long-distance lenses said Dr. Habash had climbed the aircraft steps with difficulty.

He flew out of France leaving the Socialist government to cope with the disastrous political fallout from his three-day stay.

Mastermind of a series of hijackings in the 1960s and 1970s, Dr. Habash had been detained in custody as a judge, Jean-Louis Brugiere, prepared to question him about Middle East-backed

attacks in France.

He had been set to leave France since doctors on Friday ruled he was not fit enough to be questioned by the judge.

With the detention order lifted, French security forces arranged a decoy to spirit Dr. Habash out of the hospital safely.

The interior ministry said there had been no legal reason to keep him in the absence of any international or national arrest warrants against him.

Palestinian leader welcome in Jordan any time

AMMAN (J.T.) — While Dr. Habash was en route to Tunis, his destination was a source of intense speculation, especially to people in Jordan. Various news reports said he was headed for Amman, Algiers or Damascus. The Jordanian government would not officially comment on the reports, but informed sources told the Jordan Times that Dr. Habash would have been welcome here, and the Kingdom would have furnished him with all medical assistance he needed.

"Dr. Habash is welcome in Amman," an informed source said. "He is a former member of the Jordanian Parliament and he is thus entitled to all facilities that Jordan can provide him with," the source added.

Dr. Youssef Qussous, director of the Royal Medical Services, said that Al Hussein Medical Centre, which is Jordan's largest army hospital, would provide "maximum medical attention" to Dr. Habash. "In Jordan he is at home," Dr. Qussous said.

PLO officials in Tunis said early Saturday that Dr. Habash would not head for Amman initially but may do so later for medical attention.

Although Dr. Habash's wife had told reporters in Paris that he was in Paris only for a check-up, PLO sources in Paris said that the Palestinian leader could speak "with great difficulty."

His daughter, Lama, who lives in Amman, said she spoke to her father after his arrival in Tunis.

"My father just spoke to me from Tunis and told me that his health situation was good and that his flight from Paris to Tunis was okay," Lama Habash told Reuters.

"His voice was like always. He sounded in good spirits," she said. "My mother also spoke to me and said he was feeling well."

His daughter did not say whether he would be making a transit stop in Tunis or would go into hospital there. "Later, the line got cut off while we were in the middle of our talk," she said.

French doctors told French magistrate Jean-Louis Brugiere, the country's top-terrorism investigator, who had hoped to interrogate Dr. Habash, that Dr. Habash had lost nearly all his ability to speak as a result of a shock to his head.

Algerian police hunt preachers

ALGIERS (Agencies) — Police hunted defiant mosque preachers on Saturday after about 30 people were wounded and 70 arrested in clashes between Muslim fundamentalists and security forces at mass prayers in Algerian cities.

A wanted leader of the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) was among those who defied an official ban on Friday, preaching a political sermon to a group of activists in a tiny Algiers suburban mosque.

"Control of the mosques is equivalent to control of Islam. We are not ready to accept this... each attempt to destroy the FIS will bring an earthquake," witnesses quoted Mohammad Said

as saying. Mr. Said is the most influential FIS leader still at liberty, according to a source close to the security forces.

Other FIS leaders have been detained for defying Algeria's new five-man presidency and challenging the cancellation of an unfinished general election the FIS was poised to win.

Premier Sidahmed Ghazali, who organised Algeria's first free parliamentary elections, may soon be fired by military rulers who took power after Muslim radicals looked likely to win, newspapers reported Saturday.

The independent newspaper El

Watan reported that Mohammad Boudiaf, a war hero heading the five-man high state committee, has rejected Mr. Ghazali's market-oriented economic reform proposals and wishes to install his own government.

The high state committee, dominated by Defence Minister Maj. Gen. Khaled Nezzar, has taken over this North African country since generals forced President Chadli Benjedid to resign last month.

Mr. Ghazali, who organised the elections under Mr. Benjedid and stayed on as head of govern-

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Four kids proudly pose Saturday in front of their masterpiece (photo by Youssef Al 'Allan)

Brrr weather to taper off tonight

By a Jordan Times
Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The snowstorm which affected Jordan and the eastern Mediterranean regions in the past two days is expected by the Department of Meteorology to taper off by Sunday evening.

The snowstorm, with high winds estimated at the speed of 75 kms an hour, affected most regions in the Kingdom, with snow and heavy rain falling on hilly regions 850 metres in elevation, which included western Amman, Karak, Balqa and Shabab mountains causing road blockages and disruptions in communications.

The Civil Defence Department (CDD), the Public Security Department (PSD), the Armed Forces and the public works services were all alerted to deal with any emergencies.

Reports said that combined teams were busy opening roads in Salt, Rashadiyeh, Sweileh, Jerash, Queen Alia International Airport highway, the King Hussein Medical Centre road, Al Rashid and Abu Nuseir districts among the western areas of Amman.

Army helicopters were also employed in outlying areas affected by the snow and, according to CDD men, they dealt with five fires, 25 first aid cases and 35 rescue operations.

Minister of Public Works Hayel Al Surour led a group of officials in inspecting the road conditions and the teams' work in a number of regions. By evening, most of the roads were reported by officials to have been opened except for some northern regions within the Ajloun District where snow was reported in some areas to be 40 centimetres deep.

Meteorology Department Director Ali Abanda said that by Monday a new low depression will be formed over Cyprus bringing fresh rainfalls and snow that will continue through Tuesday. The rain and snow will almost complete the replenishment of the dams that irrigate farmlands in the dry season in Jordan, officials said.

Jordan Valley Authority (JVA) officials said that the King Talal Dam Saturday had 73 million cubic metres of water out of 80 million cubic metre capacity while the Wadi Al Arab Dam had 13 million cubic metres of water out of a 15 million cubic metre capacity. The other dams were earlier reported by the JVA to be full, ensuring bumper crops in the Jordan Valley region. JVA officials said that the farmers in the Jordan Valley have been receiving water from the dams free of charge for the past month.

King receives Hawatmeh; visits Mdanat, Abu Tayeh

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein, who is now recuperating after a minor surgery at the King Hussein Medical Centre, Saturday received Nayef Hawatmeh, leader of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP).

Mr. Hawatmeh called on the King to offer his congratulations on the successful surgery, wishing King Hussein speedy recovery.

The King's doctors had said that he was in excellent health and would leave hospital within two days.

A large number of citizens

have called at the hospital to offer congratulations to the King.

Also Saturday, the King visited the Lower House of Parliament members Issa Mdanat and Nayef Abu Tayeh who are receiving treatment at the Queen Alia Heart Diseases Centre at Al Hussein Medical Centre.

King Hussein inquired about the two deputies' health.

Mr. Mdanat and Mr. Abu Tayeh expressed their profound appreciation and gratitude for King Hussein's gesture and wished him continued good health and happiness.

Syria protests to Germany over seizure of tanks

DAMASCUS (R) — Syria said on Saturday it had protested to Germany over the seizure of a freighter carrying tanks Damascus had bought from Czechoslovakia.

An official statement said the German ambassador to Syria was summoned to the foreign office. He was handed the protest and a demand for an explanation of the interception of the freighter in the Mediterranean on Wednesday.

The freighter Godewind was reported to be carrying 16 Soviet-built T-72 tanks from Czechoslovakia army stocks when stopped by German warships and ordered to put into Gibraltar.

Bonn government spokesman Dieter Vogel said on Friday the German-registered Godewind, which had set out from the Polish

port of Szczecin, was being escorted to Hamburg or another north German port and would arrive in about a week.

The statement said Syrian embassy in Bonn had lodged a similar protest.

The Germans had responded that the action was not against Syria but the shipping company as part of an investigation against breach of export laws, it said.

Bonn had also told Damascus it did not intend to impound the tanks and expressed a desire to settle the issue cordially.

"The German government does not intend to keep the load," the Syrian statement said.

The Bonn government denied opposition charges that Syria might have used German aid for

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Bush, Yeltsin formalise new relationship, agree to meet later this year

CAMP DAVID (AP) — President George Bush and Russian President Boris Yeltsin formalised the new Washington-Moscow relationship with a meeting Saturday, and scheduled more talks later this year.

Mr. Bush said he and Mr. Yeltsin met "not as adversaries, but as friends."

The Camp David meeting took place on Mr. Yeltsin's 61st birthday. He told reporters, "the best present is meeting with president of the United States, George Bush, and working hard today."

Mr. Yeltsin and his wife Naina arrived by helicopter in freezing snow flurries for his first formal meeting with Mr. Bush since the demise of the old Soviet Union and the formation of Common-

wealth of Independent States. "Russia and the United States are starting a new relationship and it's based on trust," and a commitment to economic and political freedom, Bush said at a news conference after their three-hour meeting had ended.

Mr. Bush said the leaders would leave it to the experts to nail down details on nuclear reductions but he "saluted" Mr. Yeltsin's proposal that both sides reduce long-range nuclear warheads to no more than 2,500. Mr. Bush proposed on Tuesday to set levels at about 4,000.

The Russian president said he and Mr. Bush had agreed on a series of joint programmes to

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Palestinian boycott of Moscow talks ensured full representation

By Lamis Andoni
and Sana Attiyeh

AMMAN — Palestinian absence from the Middle East peace talks held in Moscow last week has been crucial and successful in asserting demands for a comprehensive Palestinian representation and national rights, according to Palestinian delegates who returned from Moscow on their way to the Israeli occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

In the view of members of the Palestinian delegation, the Palestinian absence was necessary to emphasise once and for all that the peace process could not continue while the Palestinian people was not represented in its totality and the Palestinian rights were not fully addressed.

"There was a need for a principled and clear positions that will be more effective than a Palestinian participation based on 'compromise or substance,' Palestinian spokeswoman, Dr. Hanan Ashrawi, told a press conference in Amman Saturday.

"Our message was clear and simple: enough is enough," Palestinian delegate Saeb Erekat said, referring to Palestinian refusal to make more concessions regarding the representation of Palestinians from the diaspora and east Jerusalem.

Dr. Ashrawi, and other Palestinian delegates, however, implied that the absence of the required level of Arab coordination at Moscow had in the final result weakened the overall Arab and Palestinian position.

They warned that if Arab coordination continued at the same level, the Arab and Palestinian objectives of linking the bilateral talks with the multilateral talks and ensuring that a comprehensive solution based on United Nations Security Council resolutions, involving an Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories, would be difficult to attain.

"We need Arab coordination between Arab governments, as well as among the working committees (at the multilaterals)," Dr. Ashrawi urged.

In the press conference the Palestinian spokeswoman indicated that the priorities which the Palestinians had sought to highlight at Moscow, even though they did not take part in the talks, were the following:

— To assert a comprehensive national representation of the Palestinian people.

— To stress that multilateral talks on security and economic arrangements in the region should be the result of a solution to all aspects of the Arab-

Israeli conflict — especially the Palestinian problem, and not the other way round.

— That there cannot be any meaningful progress at the multilateral talks without progress towards an Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories at the bilateral talks.

Dr. Ashrawi said that the Palestinians were able to secure support of many participants at the Moscow talks for their demands despite the delegation's absence from the conference.

The Palestinians, who had earlier accepted that Palestinian representation be confined to Palestinians from the Israeli occupied territories, refused to attend the third phase of talks in Moscow last week without the inclusion of representatives from the diaspora and east Jerusalem.

The move initially raised concern that the Palestinians would miss a golden opportunity of addressing more than 30 countries that took part in the Moscow talks.

But the Palestinian delegates, who returned from Moscow Friday, disagreed, arguing that their absence was not only necessary but had achieved important objectives that would have positive implications on the peace process.

According to the Palestinians, the main goal achieved by their decision not to take

part has been the approval by the U.S. and Russia, the two co-sponsors of the peace process, on the participation of Palestinians from the diaspora in the working committees.

According to Dr. Ashrawi,

U.S. Secretary of State James Baker has not only accepted Palestinian participation in the two reported committees, dealing with refugees and economic development, but he also did not preclude the possi-

bility of including Palestinians in all the other committees. (see box).

In Dr. Ashrawi's view, by not taking part in the Moscow talks, until their demands for a broader representation were

addressed, the Palestinians have secured international solidarity and most significantly recognition of their national rights.

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Jordanian, Palestinian stands served own interests

AMMAN (J.T.) — Palestinian spokeswoman Hanan Ashrawi said that the fact that Jordan attended the Moscow talks and the Palestinians did not will have no bearing on future coordination between the Jordanian and Palestinian sides.

"The Jordanian-Palestinian relationship is not based on immediate or temporary issues. It is a long term relationship," Dr. Ashrawi asserted.

Jordan, for the first time since the beginning of the peace process last October, last week attended negotiations in Moscow without the Palestinians.

But Dr. Ashrawi said that each side had its own reasons and special considerations that prompted their respective decisions regarding participation in last week's talks. She stressed that the fact that each took a different decision regarding the multilateral talks would not and should not affect the future coordination especially between the two sides of the joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation.

"The joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation is an expression of Jordanian-Palestinian coordination and agreement and not an end by itself," she said.

Dr. Ashrawi, however, lashed out at other Arab states which attended the multilateral talks with Israel without consultation. In rare public criticism of Arab states, she said it now looked unlikely that those who attended the multilateral peace talks would boycott the next round if no progress on issues of substance was reached in bilateral negotiations.

"We cannot believe that Arab states already officially met Israel without prior coordination and meetings with other Arab countries," Dr. Ashrawi said.

"We cannot imagine how the GCC countries met Israel without prior meetings with the PLO, Jordan and other Arab countries."

Palestinians to submit names for working groups

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Palestinians will submit to the U.S. names of participants in the working groups that are scheduled to meet in the spring to follow up discussions of the Arab-Israeli multilateral regional talks that opened in Moscow last week.

Dr. Hanan Ashrawi told a press conference here on Saturday that the Palestinians will submit names of participants and lists of the working groups that the Palestinians would like to join.

Although Palestinian sources said that there was no official decision yet on Palestinian participation at the multilateral talks, Dr. Ashrawi's statement indicated that the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) will respond positively to the American proposals provided Palestinians from the diaspora are included.

According to Dr. Ashrawi, the U.S. has not restricted Palestinian participation to two groups only, as was initially reported — i.e. the refugees and regional development committees.

"When we discussed it with (U.S. Secretary of State James) Baker he said that the Palestinians could also participate in committees they see as relevant or as important. He also said that the Palestinian participation could be comprehensive and that it is the Palestinians' choice," Dr. Ashrawi said.

"We are going to present a list of participants and a list of the committees we want to participate in," she said. "I think that the co-sponsors' position is quite clear on this issue and that they will accept Palestinian participation from outside and inside the occupied territories."

Moussa: Syria ready for full ties with Israel in exchange for full withdrawal from Golan

David Makovsky
The Jerusalem Post

MOSCOW — Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Moussa says he has "reasons to believe" Syria is ready to inform Israel of its willingness to sign a peace treaty and establish diplomatic relations in return for a simultaneous Israeli pledge that it will fully withdraw from the Golan Heights.

When asked by The Jerusalem Post in Moscow on Wednesday whether he feels Syria, a close ally of Egypt, is ready to sign a peace treaty with Israel and establish diplomatic ties, Moussa confidently said, "Yes, in exchange for full withdrawal."

The Prime Minister's Yitzhak Shamir's office Thursday night declined to comment on Mr. Moussa's remarks. Spokesman Ehud Goll said, "I don't want to relate to the ideas mentioned by Amr Moussa. Any idea that the Syrians have they can raise at the bilateral talks."

When asked if withdrawal means the West Bank and Gaza as well, Mr. Moussa repeated that he was explicitly referring to the Golan Heights. The Egyptian foreign minister said such a simultaneous move between Syria and Israel is now necessary to break the logjam in the different sets of bilateral peace talks.

"I believe some progress has to be made in the bilateral anytime now," Mr. Moussa said. "Someone needs to break this vicious cycle. We see the (peace) talks have been going on for three months without moving a centimetre. There can be no solution but this."

Specifically, Mr. Moussa — citing an undisclosed U.S. proposal — said that Israel and Syria should simultaneously announce their willingness to establish di-

plomatic relations in return for an Israeli withdrawal from the Golan, instead of waiting for the other to move first.

Acting on the mechanics of the arrangement between Israel and Syria, Mr. Moussa said, "If I tell you that I am going to withdraw fully, will you be willing to recognise me and exchange embassies? That is how it should start. It should start between those two. I believe in that."

While refusing to divulge why he thinks Damascus is ready to make such a move, Mr. Moussa said he would only say he has "reasons to believe" that Syria is ready for it and this is his "impression."

Earlier in the interview and in a different context, Mr. Moussa said he was in touch with Syrian President Hafez Assad before the Moscow conference and plans to be in contact with him after it was over. After renewing ties a couple years ago after a dozen years' break in the aftermath of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat's visit to Jerusalem, links between Damascus and Cairo have been close, thereby giving Mr. Moussa's views on Syrian intentions special weight.

Should Moussa be correct and Syria indeed be willing to sign a treaty and establish diplomatic ties with Israel, it would be a major breakthrough in the peace process. While Syrian envoys at the opening Madrid conference in the fall and at the subsequent rounds of bilateral peace talks in Washington said Damascus favours peace with Israel, they have pointedly and repeatedly evaded questioning on how they define the term peace.

Israeli officials say that so far, Syria's view of peace is receiving the Golan in return for nothing more than non-belligerence.

Syria, according to Israel, is not willing to go any further due to Assad's deeply-rooted Ba'athist ideological antipathy to Israel. Barring such a Syrian willingness to agree to a peace treaty, some Israeli officials have said privately that they feel no public pressure to consider ceding the Golan Heights in peace talks with Damascus.

Mr. Moussa emphatically stated that such a simultaneous declaration of intentions by Damascus and Israel would not work to exclude the Palestinians. To the contrary, it would give new impetus to Israeli-Palestinian talks towards interim arrangements.

A breakthrough with Syria is widely seen as paving the way towards an accord with Lebanon, as well. Some Israeli analysts say, however, there has been suspicion between Syria and Palestinians, with each fearing that the other will seek to cut a separate deal with Israel, weakening their own bargaining position vis-à-vis the Israelis.

Mr. Moussa also said that multilateral talks on regional issues and cooperation will not be able to advance appreciably without progress on the bilaterals. However, should there be substantial Israeli-Syrian progress, he said, "I believe the multilaterals would jump."

Mr. Moussa said that until progress is made on the bilaterals, multilateral cooperation is "precarious." He said Israel must accept "land for peace" before such regional cooperation goes ahead. But when pressed, he admitted that land for peace does not refer to the Palestinian issue for the next several years, due to the ground rules of Madrid that call for talks to focus on interim arrangements.

He therefore suggested that the idea of Israeli territorial withdrawal only revolve around the Golan Heights at this time. Without Israeli withdrawal from the Golan in return for peace, he said, "I don't think this process (the multilaterals) has any chance. It can't go on its own legs... Everything depends on the bilateral talks."

In terms of Egyptian priorities in the multilateral talks, Mr. Moussa reiterated a view put forward in his speech to the conference on Tuesday, namely that his country is concerned first and foremost with arms control. Mr. Moussa indicated that Egypt wants the talks to deal with Israel's nuclear capability, albeit within the comprehensive framework of scrutinizing the non-conventional capabilities of other countries, such as Iraq and Syria.

He said the Arabs will not allow Israel to ignore arms control, while seeking to make progress on other regional fronts.

Regarding regional talks on refugees, Mr. Moussa was indignant that Israel would equate the plight of Jews who fled from Arab lands 40 years ago with the Jewish refugees. There are Jews who came to Israel and became Israeli citizens. You cannot have your cake and eat it... We are talking about people (the Palestinians) living in camps outside their homes."

Mr. Moussa also said he was pleased the U.S. had found a solution to the inclusion of Palestinians from abroad to join multilateral talks on refugees and economic development, saying this is a compromise the Arab states can live with. He said he hopes Israel would come around to this view, as well.

Kuwaiti shoots at police station demanding Islamic law

KUWAIT CITY (AP) — A bearded Kuwaiti opened fire with a machine gun at a police station and in the air demanding implementation of Islamic law, press reports said Saturday.

The 23-year-old man, identified only as Fahd H., gave himself up to police after a three-hour standoff Friday in front of his home in the Farwaniya neighbourhood.

Al-Anba newspaper said the police brought three Muslim clergymen to the low-rent neighbourhood near Kuwait's international airport to convince Fahd to give in. His father, some of his 18 siblings and friends also took part in the negotiations, the reports said.

"My brother is very religious, and he is very tense because one of our brothers is imprisoned in Iraq," Fahd's brother Mishal was quoted as saying. Over 500 Kuwaitis remain in Iraqi prisons. Mishal said Fahd was planning to go to Afghanistan to join a third brother fighting with the Mujahideen.

Few Kuwaitis gave in the weapons they acquired during the seven-month Iraqi occupation of their country and after its liberation Feb. 26.

While Islamic law is a main source of legislation in the emirate, Islamic movements have been demanding that Islamic sharia become the sole source of legislation.

The emir, Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah, formed a committee late last year to fully implement Islamic law in the country, but few expect such change soon.

Central bank says U.S. aid a must

TEL AVIV (R) — The governor of the central bank said on Saturday Israel could not borrow funds to absorb Jewish immigrants unless the United States provided it with loan guarantees.

"Obviously, Israel has the capability to borrow but not such a high amount," Governor of the Bank of Israel Jacob Frenkel told Israeli Radio in an interview from Switzerland.

"The importance of the guarantees is that the guarantees will enable Israel to borrow at the level it has to, which is at a reasonable level of interest," he said.

The U.S. administration last September delayed consideration of \$10 billion in loan guarantees, fearing it would hamper Middle East peace talks. Washington opposes Israel's huge settlement drive in the occupied territories, considering it an obstacle to peace.

Israel says it needs the money to finance the absorption of hundreds of thousands of immigrants from the former Soviet Union.

The United States is likely to link the loan guarantees to a freeze on new Jewish settlement

in the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip. It also wants Israel, the largest recipient of U.S. foreign aid at three billion dollars annually, to speed up economic reform.

Frenkel, a champion of economic reform, warned that fighting a public relations battle was not the way to secure the guarantees.

"Remember there is no public relations without policy," Frenkel said. "There is a list of steps that would encourage employment, that would change the direction of the economy... not only by public relations but by real actions, that's the true flag."

U.S. says torture widespread in Turkey

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) — A U.S. State Department report on human rights said torture remained a widespread practice at Turkish police stations last year.

"Although Turkey has signed several international conventions against torture, it has not succeeded in reducing the incidence of torture of persons in police custody," said the report, released by the U.S. embassy here.

The report said that police brutality largely occurred during periods of incommunicado detention before suspects were brought before a court.

It said 18 deaths were reported in police custody last year, at least some of which might have been due to police torture.

The report added that although some of the deaths reportedly occurred when suspects committed suicide by jumping from police stations' marks of torture were found on the bodies.

A Turkish foreign ministry spokesman, Ferhat Ataman, said the U.S. embassy had relayed the report on Friday afternoon.

"It is being studied," he said. In the past, Turkey has acknowledged that torture was used in some cases, but denied it was practiced systematically.

Turkey, the third-largest recipient of U.S. aid, is considered to have greatly improved its human rights situation since it returned to democracy in 1983 following three years of military rule.

However, allegations of torture have persisted, and could hurt Turkey's efforts to join the European Community.

The report mentioned high-pressure cold water hoses, electric shocks, beating of the genitalia and hanging by the arms as methods used at the Turkish police stations.

The report said that police in some cases refrained from using those methods because they left marks. Instead, it said, they used psychological abuse, such as verbal intimidation and threats.

According to the report, prosecution of alleged perpetrators of torture has been "sporadic." It said judicial authorities investi-

gated only about half of the formal complaints involving torture, and prosecuted a small fraction of them.

It added that the government officials found guilty in torture cases have traditionally received light sentences.

The report also said the armed Kurdish guerrilla group, PKK, had claimed 3,000 lives in its campaign of terrorism in south-eastern Turkey.

The PKK, or Kurdish Labour army, has been fighting a guerrilla war in the region since 1984 for an independent state.

But the report also said security forces trying to suppress the PKK used excessive force against noncombatants.

The report also mentioned that Turkey's new coalition government, which came to power in November, has vowed to improve the country's human rights record.

Premier Suleyman Demirel has called torture a crime against humanity.

MIDDLE EAST NEWS IN BRIEF

Niger closes border with Algeria

NIAMEY (R) — Niger closed its desert frontier with Algeria on Saturday, cutting a popular trans-Saharan route after five European tourists were injured in a rebellion by Tuareg nomads. An interior ministry statement on Friday night said the border at Assamakka, 1,500 kilometres north of the capital Niamey, would be closed indefinitely from Feb. 1. Three Italians, a German and a Frenchman were injured, one seriously, in an attack on their group last week near the uranium-mining town of Arlit. The government blamed Tuareg rebels fighting for autonomy in the north of the arid west African country, but the tourists said they were shot at by troops who mistook them for Tuaregs. Tuareg raids against government targets and travellers in Niger have intensified since late last year. Assamakka is the main route into Niger for tourists crossing the Sahara to the historic desert town of Agadez. Neighbouring Mali is also grappling with a Tuareg uprising and its tourist industry has been hard hit by the rebellion. The Malian government signed a 30-day truce with Tuareg envoys in Algeria a week ago.

Military head says CIS to curb arms sales to Iran

WASHINGTON (R) — The new Commonwealth of Independent States is taking steps to reduce arms exports to Iran and ensure military equipment does not go to extremist states, the Washington Post reported on Saturday. CIS Armed Forces Chief Marshal Yevgeny Shaposhnikov told the newspaper in an interview action was being taken after foreign ministers of three nations recently questioned the sales. Speaking at the Russian mission to the United Nations, Shaposhnikov declined to explain the new export curbs in detail, calling the issue "very delicate." He told the Post he believed "arms should not get into the hands of some extremist states" and that he shared the concerns of the West about trading with Iran.

Iranians gather at Khomeini's tomb

NICOSIA (R) — Crowds gathered at the tomb of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini on Saturday to mark the anniversary of his return to Iran which led to the overthrow of the monarchy in 1979. "People from various walks of life, as well as civilian and military officials and foreign guests attended the inauguration ceremonies at the shrine, decorated with Iranian flags and flowers," the national news agency IRNA said. Helicopters dropped flowers on marchers heading for the Behesht-e Zahra cemetery in south Tehran. IRNA said anniversary celebrations would be held between Feb. 1 — the day Khomeini returned from exile in France — and Feb. 11 — the day the Islamic revolution triumphed.

Ozal says offensive against Kurds imminent

ANKARA (R) — President Turgut Ozal said the army was planning a major offensive to wipe out Kurdish guerrilla bases in southeast Turkey, the semi-official Anatolian news agency said.

"I'm telling you openly. In days ahead, Turkish armed forces will come to the region with a very big force. This force will be much more than normal. It will wipe out everything in the mountains," the agency quoted Mr. Ozal on Friday night as telling visitors from the southeast.

Mr. Ozal said he would declare a general amnesty if the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) quit its struggle of independence for Turkey's 10 million ethnic Kurds.

Mitterrand's heart sank when he heard Habash was in Paris

NEW YORK (R) — When French President Francois Mitterrand discovered that Palestinian leader George Habash had been admitted to a Paris clinic for treatment for a stroke, his heart sank.

"When we found out, it took just 10 seconds to realise what this meant," Mr. Mitterrand told journalists on Friday en route to New York for a summit meeting of the United Nations Security Council.

The only thing Mitterrand could say was: "They're crazy."

They were the two top foreign ministry civil servants who — according to the official version — alone took the decision to admit the leader of the Popular Front for the Liberation

of Palestine (PFLP) from Tunis on Wednesday.

Mitterrand and his Foreign Minister Roland Dumas, on a state visit to the Gulf Arab state of Oman at the time, said they were never consulted.

The affair has turned into a major embarrassment for the French government, with Israel threatening to lodge a complaint and opposition leaders demanding the resignation of Dumas, Prime Minister Edith Cresson and Interior Minister Philippe Marchand.

The two foreign ministry officials — Chief of Staff Francois Scherer and top policy adviser Bernard Kessedjian — resigned on Thursday along with a senior

interior ministry aide.

The head of the French Red Cross, Georgina Dufoux, gave up her role as adviser to the president on a drug abuse.

"It's a catastrophe to have lost the two men (Scherer and Kessedjian)," said Mitterrand, in talkative mood about the presidential Concorde. "But a mistake was made."

Mr. Dumas, accompanying President Mitterrand to New York, said Mr. Scherer had acted sincerely in offering help to a sick man, regardless of his past. Mr. Habash's group pioneered the airline hijack and launched repeated attacks on civilians in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

Mr. Scherer and Mr. Kessedjian

had thought it was just a routine matter, the kind of issue on which they make decisions 200 times a day, and never thought to consult their superiors, Mr. Dumas said.

"But (Scherer) didn't think in political terms," Mr. Dumas commented. "This was Habash."

Mr. Habash's wife, Helda, died on Friday that her husband had suffered a stroke, insisting he had gone to France for a routine check-up.

The affair has revealed confusion, lack of foresight and failure to communicate amid government ranks.

Opposition politicians say that even if the politicians did not know what was going on, they still have some troubling ques-

tions to answer about the behaviour of their civil service.

According to senior political sources in Paris, the senior civil servant at Mitterrand's Elysee Palace only found out about Habash's imminent arrival on Wednesday from someone outside the government. He did not pass on the information.

The same sources said Cresson was so angry about the affair she had asked Mitterrand for the resignations of Mr. Dumas and Mr. Marchand. Mitterrand turned down her demand.

There were even rumours Mr. Dumas had tendered his own resignation. But the foreign minister swiftly denied them. "Me? It's out of the question," Mr. Dumas said.

France long entangled in Middle East conflict

By Bernard Edinger
Reuter

PARIS — France's quest for a political role in the Middle East has frequently embroiled it in the region's intractable feuds, making it a target for gunmen and hostage-takers. This week's furor over the admission of Palestinian leader George Habash to Paris for medical treatment is only the latest in a long series of French entanglements with Lebanon, Libya, Iran and the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The leader of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine is now the first controversial Middle East figure to strain French hospitality. Only last August, exiled former Iranian Prime Minister

Shapour Bakhtiar was murdered in a Paris suburb. A French judge has implicated Iranian authorities in the killing, causing strain with Tehran.

Iran, whose revolutionary leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini found refuge in France before he overthrew the Shah in 1979, blamed Paris for arming and bankrolling Iraq during their 1980s war. Iranian-backed groups seized French hostages in Beirut to press Tehran's demands for an end to French aid for Baghdad.

Israel and its supporters accuse the French, whose empire once included Lebanon, Syria, Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco, of pursuing a relentlessly pro-Arab policy for mercantile as well as strategic reasons.

But radical Arab and Islamic states accuse Paris of bias against them, notably in its longstanding support for Lebanon's Christians.

France's involvement began nearly 1,000 years ago with the Crusaders' Latin kingdom of Jerusalem. French knights dotted the region with castles whose ruins still carry such French names as Beaufort and Belvoir.

But France's role as traditional protector of Middle East Christian communities, which often led it to be viewed as an oppressor of Muslims, has changed in the past quarter century. After being Israel's main

arms supplier and political ally for more than a decade, Paris dramatically switched sides in 1967 in an avowed quest for cheap oil and rich customers.

It has since been in the vanguard of West European countries backing Arab causes and advocating the creation of an independent Palestinian Arab state alongside Israel.

The policy has created major headaches for successive

non's warring conflicts. Pro-Arab policies did not shield France from Middle East violence. Paris was the scene throughout the 1970s and 1980s of shootings and bomb attacks by radical Arab and Iranian organisations.

They culminated in a 1985-1986 haphazard bombing campaign in public places which killed some two dozen people and created a psychosis in the French capital.

Ties with Arab Middle East states were, however, big business for French industry — especially those manufacturing arms — and resulted in France becoming the world's third largest weapons exporter after the United States and former Soviet Union.

That policy has sometimes strange results and French troops fighting alongside the allied coalition in the Gulf war found they shared the same equipment as their Iraqi enemies.

French officers were galled that the Iraqis had more up-to-date French gear.

Paris still prides itself on being close to Lebanon's French-speaking Christians. Former Lebanese leaders General Michel Aoun and ex-president Amin Gemayel live here in exile.

Paris' ties with the Maronites also led to clashes with Iran, culminating in attacks against French peace-keeping forces in Lebanon by Tehran-backed Lebanon Shiite guerrillas.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 73111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

17:30 Les Bedouins
17:45 Geopoece
18:10 L'ecole des Fans
19:00 News in French
19:15 Carnet de notes
19:30 News in Hebrew
20:00 Empty Nest
20:20 Doc. Equinox
21:10 Doc. Equinox
22:50 Switched in English

PRAYER TIMES

65:06 Fajr
66:26 (Sunrise) Dhuhr
11:49 Dhuhr
14:47 Asr
17:12 Maghreb
18:32 'Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swifich Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632785.
St. Joseph Church Tel. 634390.
Church of the Annunciation Tel.

637440.
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terrence Church Tel. 622366
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541.
Anglican Church Tel. 625383. Tel. 626543.
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 711311
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 712261.
Syrian Orthodox Church Tel. 717151.
Armenian International Church Tel. 683326.
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 811295.
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 823824, 654932.
Church of the Nazareth Tel. 675691.

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.
It will be partly cloudy and a slight rise in temperatures will take place. Winds will be northeasterly moderate. In Agaba, it will be partly cloudy with northerly moderate and seas calm. Min./Max. temp. Amman 1/7
Agaba 8/16
Deserts 2/10

Jordan Valley 7/15

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 3, Agaba 14. Humidity readings: Amman 95 per cent, Agaba 34 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Saad Ali 788285
Dr. Ghazi Abu Shleiba 752405
Dr. Ahmad Hunchin 752118
Dr. Khalil Jabali 740740
Pines pharmacy 661912
Fedorovs pharmacy 778336
Al Azame pharmacy 637055
Natrovsky pharmacy 623672
Al Salan pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shmeisai pharmacy 637660
IRBID:
Dr. Ali Al Samman (—)
Al Sharras pharmacy 273825
ZARQA:
Dr. Khalid Abu Hamein (—)
Khalifah pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 891228
Blood Bank 751211
Highway Police 643402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Department 630321
Hotel Complaints 603800
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage 897467
Complaints 897467
Amman Municipality 787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone Repairs 623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32
Khalid Maternity, J. Amn 644281/6
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 75111/25
Army, Marika 89161/15
Queen Alia Hospital 602240/50
Amal Hospital 674155
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323

Jordan Television 731111
Radio Jordan 744111
Water Authority 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power 636381
RJ Flight Information 08-53200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)32200-5, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
09:00 Jeddah (RU)
09:30 Agaba (RU)
09:55 Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RU)
Zarqa National Hospital (09)000560
Ibn Sina Hospital (09)986732
Al Hima Modern Hospital (09)999990
IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital (02)275553
Greek Catholic Hospital (02)272275
Ibn Al Nafies Hospital (02)247100
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital (03)314111

18:05 Doha, Bahrain (RU)
18:45 Cairo (RU)
17:00 New York, Amsterdam (RU)
16:00 Madrid, Rome (RU)
18:00 Paris, Geneva (RU)
18:15 Frankfurt, Vienna (RU)
19:20 London, Brussels (RU)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

09:30 Cairo (MS)
14:00 Moscow (SU)
18:20 Larnaca (CY)
18:35 Beirut (ME)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

06:15 Beirut (RU)
07:00 Agaba (RU)
11:10 Tunis, Casablanca (RU)
12:45 Cairo (RU)
15:40 Larnaca (RU)
18:00 Jeddah (RU)
20:00 Riyadh (RU)
22:30 Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RU)
22:50 Kuala Lumpur, Singapore (RU)
22:00 Bangkok (RU)
22:45 Samra (RU)

18:50 Beirut, Rome (AZ)
16:00 Moscow (SU)
19:10 Larnaca (CY)

MARKET PRICES

Upplower price in fils per kg.
Apple (red) 700/700
Apple (yellow) 500/500
Banana 500/450
Banana (Mukansar) 550/500
Beans 180/120
Cabbage 200/150
Cauliflower 220/160
Cucumbers (large) 300/250
Cucumbers (small) 540/500
Eggplant 650/550
Garlic 180/120
Grapesfruit 180/120
Lemon 320/400
Marrow (large) 300/250
Marrow (small) 300/250
Onion (dry) 300/150
Onion (green

Bridging the gap: American and Jordanian students exchange views on the region and its people

By Nidal M. Ibrahim
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A group of American students currently on a tour of the Middle East engaged in some lively debate with their Arab counterparts at the Orthodox Club Friday.

The event, designed to acquaint the students with the Orthodox Club, the Orthodox community's role in Jordan and the Kingdom's positions on the Gulf war and other regional issues, was attended by a sparse crowd of mostly young people.

The students, from Eastern Mennonite College in Harrisonburg, Virginia, heard a lecture by officials concerning Jordan, the Middle East and the ongoing peace process.

Jordanians, on the other hand, were treated to a lecture given by Calvin Shenk, a professor of religious studies at the American school, on Mennonite teachings, beliefs and actions during the Gulf war.

"We're in Jordan because we want to know more of Eastern forms of the Christian faith," Mr. Shenk said. "We're here also because many Palestinians live here and they have their perspective on the (Gulf) crisis."

Reflecting on the U.S.-led allied drive to evict Iraq from Kuwait, Mr. Shenk said "we know our nation caused great pain to you and your neighbours and some distress in some of us."

The Mennonite community is opposed to the ongoing embargo

on Iraq because it feels that the "denial of food to pressure" countries is not acceptable, said Jerry Martin, the Mennonite Central Committee member who represents the community in Jordan.

For his part, Mr. Shenk said he sent a letter to U.S. President George Bush expressing his opposition to the war and the embargo. In addition, the community sent milk powder to Iraq to demonstrate its opposition to the embargo.

The Mennonite school also held a "peace sabbath" on the day the allies started their massive bombing campaign against Iraq. According to Mr. Shenk, classes were cancelled on the occasion.

By far the most lively part of the evening occurred during the question and answer session, when students exchanged views. Arabs for the most part, tried to downplay the turbulent history of the region and concentrated on the social aspects of Israeli actions, the Gulf war and the continuing U.N.-sanctioned embargo on Iraq.

The question that drew the most attention, with about five people offering to answer, was asked by John Atkins, a 21-year-old Sociology major. "When the West Bank was under Jordanian rule, why didn't the Jordanian government grant independence to the West Bank?" he asked.

The question caused a stir among the about 80 people in the audience as four or five people

requested that they be allowed to answer the question. Raja Anab, a member of the club but not on the panel, stood up from his position in the audience and answered that "here in Jordan, there is no difference between a Palestinian and a Jordanian."

On the other hand, in some Arab countries, he named Kuwait and Saudi Arabia as examples, Palestinians are treated as second, third and even fourth class citizens. "Basically, in Jordan at least the Palestinians are treated on equal footing ... with Jordanians," he said.

Another audience member who took the floor gave a more direct answer to the question. "When the West Bank was under the rule of Jordan, it was not an occupation," he said. "It's different being under the rule of Israel under occupation."

Jordanians and Palestinians, he continued, share the same culture, beliefs and values. The American students, in general, admitted that they knew relatively little of the region, its history, culture and religions. For the most part, however, many displayed an eagerness and interest in learning.

"In the U.S. before the Gulf war, there was a lot of ignorance of the whole (Arab-Israeli) issue," said Dan Schenk, a 21-year-old Computer Science major.

The group, with about 31 students, wants to learn more, he said. "This is what this whole trip is about."

Another student, Kara Hartzler, said the history of American support for Israel, coupled with the strong organised efforts of the Jewish community in the U.S. to publicise Israel's positions, leads many Americans to have an understanding of the region's problems through an Israeli perspective. "(We) have heard more of Israel's problems and our attitudes reflect the needs of the Israelis rather than the needs of Arabs," the 19-year-old English major said.

Some of the students, in citing this lack of information from the Arab perspective, blamed Arabs in general and Arab-Americans in particular for failing to communicate their views.

"I think they don't stand up as much as (the Jewish community), Ms. Hartzler said. "They don't defend their people as much ..."

The students arrived in Amman Friday from Cairo where they had spent two and a half weeks. Despite being in the region for such a short time, some students said they had already gained a new perspective of the people and their problems, dispelling some basic stereotypes. For example, said Kim VanDonk, before the trip she was under the impression that all Arabs were Muslims.

The students are scheduled to be in Jordan for one week during which they will visit Jerash, Petra and other sites. They are then scheduled to travel to the West Bank.

Privatisation, economic restructuring keys to future growth, official says

By Isam Qadmani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The government is planning a comprehensive economic and social strategy that will benefit all sectors in the Kingdom and will take into account the country's resources and the ongoing economic restructuring programme agreed on with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), according to Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Transport Ali Suheimat.

The government will start by stimulating general investments in various sectors, whether those that had already achieved established themselves or those which are just starting. There are also plans to promote the free zones and the industrial cities, offering them further incentives and giving more exemptions to investors who establish businesses outside densely populated areas, Mr. Suheimat said.

Economic and social planning and the implementation of development programmes had to be halted in the past in view of economic circumstances affecting the country since 1988 and the subsequent events that led to the devaluation of the Jordanian dinar against foreign currencies as well as the accumulating deficit in the fiscal budgets and foreign debts, said Mr. Suheimat.

The present government feels that besides pursuing the economic restructuring programme, there is need to embark on a social development plan taking into account fair distribution of benefits and economic activities around the various governorates, said Mr. Suheimat.

The government will go ahead as planned in implementing public administration reforms to improve and modernise the functions of government offices, according to the minister. In striving to implement these pro-



Ali Suheimat

grammes, the minister noted, Jordan is helped by the presence of a highly skilled workforce which can offset part of the disadvantages of having limited resources.

Jordan's central geographical location also helps it to play a vital role in stimulating economic activities at the regional level, he added.

For this reason, Mr. Suheimat said, Jordan stands a good chance of attracting investors provided the present legislations concerning investments are amended and that routine and complicated procedures facing investors are reduced.

The minister said that the government is currently considering the existing law on encouraging investments with a view to reaching areas which still lack proper attention.

At the same time, the government is going ahead with plans to raise the standard and efficiency of service sectors like telecommunications services needed by businessmen and economic institutions, he said.

The expansion of the free zones and industrial cities will open the way for more investors to come from abroad and at the same time help job seekers to

find employment in the rural, urban and badia regions where different investments can be started, Mr. Suheimat said.

In reply to a question about the government's plans on land transport, Mr. Suheimat said that the country's economy depends to a large extent on its road networks, and attention is being directed at present towards providing protection to these roads. The government will use approved allocations to rebuild or expand roads, improve airport services and cater to the needs of development in the transport services in general, said the minister.

He announced that serious studies are underway to transform part of the Aqaba port into a free zone area. Indeed, Aqaba, the main sea outlet for Jordan, is instrumental in promoting the national economy since all import/export services are conducted through Aqaba harbour and Jordan's fertiliser, cement, phosphate and potash are being exported through this port, the minister added.

There are unlimited benefits from this project and it is hoped that Aqaba would attract more investments in the free zone and more manpower will be employed, creating jobs, said Mr. Suheimat.

Referring to the railways in Jordan in general and the Hijaz railway line in particular, the minister expressed the view that efforts to stimulate the Hijaz railway cannot be fruitful without cooperation with neighbouring countries through which the line passes, namely Syria and Saudi Arabia.

However, the Aqaba railway extension is being expanded since it carries phosphate from the mines in the south of Jordan to Aqaba for transport. At present, the government is discussing with the Jordan Phosphate Mines

Company (JPMC) the prospect of extending the railway line to Shideich mines to increase the volume of exported phosphate rock. It is to be coupled with an expansion of the storage facilities at Aqaba port itself, the minister noted.

With reference to Royal Jordanian (RJ), the national airline, the minister admitted that it was continuing to face difficulties, and the government was studying its problems to identify the sources of these difficulties with a view to finding appropriate solutions for them.

It is hoped that a solid plan will be implemented to deal with RJ's various issues and points of weakness so that it can pursue its mission and enhance the national economy, said Mr. Suheimat. He said that the government hopes to privatise RJ in the long run, but such step takes complicated procedures.

With regard to the Public Transport Corporation (PTC) which operates buses in Amman and surrounding regions, the minister said that the PTC, which started in the early 1970s, was planned for the Amman region alone. But in view of the expansion, the PTC will commission a number of areas to the private sector so as to provide transport services to the public.

The government plans to gradually offer the private sector the task of public transport but the PTC is taking time to find efficient transport companies which can shoulder this task and ensure its continuation, the minister added.

Gradually, he said, all the routes now used by the PTC will be taken over by the private transport companies whose operations would be monitored and controlled by the government to ensure the best services to the public.

Jordanian, French tourism ministers inaugurate new information system

By Serene Halasa
and Saada Kilani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — For the first time in the Middle East, a developed telecommunications system was inaugurated Saturday by French and Jordanian tourism ministers as part of a bilateral agreement between the two countries.

In the context of cooperation between the two countries, France, with the good relations it has and is developing with Jordan, has found a good opportunity to introduce this system in Jordan," said French Minister of Tourism Jean Michel Baylet.

Minitel, an information system by which tourists will be able to get information on various topics and sites in Jordan is being introduced as part of an agreement signed in 1988. At first, the French government is donating to Jordan 40 Minitel devices which will operate mainly in hotels.

The equipment, a present from the French government, will be connected through the telephone communication system to a central computer based at the Ministry of Tourism.

Visitors at the airport, hotels or tourist sites will obtain all necessary information about Jordan on a little screen. By dialing No. 613101, screen owners will have access to the information data base in the Ministry of Tourism.

The ministry feeds the computer information on education, economy, culture, history and other things, especially detailed information on tourist sites. The information will be

continuously revised.

The Minitel has other uses which will be introduced with time, officials said.

"We have already introduced the basic information about Jordan's touristic sites as well as general information concerning Jordan," said Rana Safadi, an employee at the Ministry of Tourism who is responsible for overseeing the Minitel programme. "We will update and add the information when necessary."

In France, the Minitel, with about six million subscribers registered as of the end of 1991, serves as a basic means to information, officials said. The system has been expanded in France to allow subscribers to obtain addresses, telephone numbers and even fax and telex numbers of almost anyone or any place in the country. It has also commercial uses by which subscribers can get information about their bank accounts as well as being able to buy and reserve travel tickets.

Also in France, the Minitel is being used for entertainment purposes, with people playing different games on the screens. It also serves as a mean to get updated press information that is distributed by press agencies.

The introduction of Minitel, while representing an increase in cooperation between France and Jordan in tourism-related fields, does not mark the only expansion in such cooperation. An agreement was signed by Minister of Tourism Yanal Hikmat and the visiting French minister Saturday to further enhance cooperation between

the two countries.

At an inauguration ceremony, Mr. Hikmat thanked the French government and its representatives and expressed hope that both sides would increase the level of cooperation.

"We hope that this will further the cooperation between our countries as laid down by their wise leadership," Mr. Hikmat said in an address to a group of Jordanian and French businessmen.

The French minister, whose visit comes in response to an invitation extended by the Jordanian government, said that tourism has become an important sector in France. He called on both sides to establish a close system of cooperation and an "accord of understanding."

The agreement between the two sides paves the ground for further cooperation in the field of tourism through setting up programmes that include holding exhibitions, scholarships and exchanging experts.

Following the ceremony, the two ministers held talks in the presence of a number of businessmen from Jordan and France as well as the president of the Aqaba Regional Authority, the director general of Royal Jordanian Airlines and representatives from the tourism sector in Jordan.

The discussions focused on pinpointing the priorities for promoting tourism and ways to set up joint touristic investment projects.

The French minister is expected to leave Jordan Sunday, ending a two-day visit to the Kingdom.

Italian association, Tourism Ministry officials agree to hold conference in Amman

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Ministry of Tourism and the Italian Tourist and Travel Agents Association signed an agreement in Amman Saturday on organising a general conference for Italian tourist and travel agents in Amman in April.

Under terms of the agreement, nearly 1,000 agents representing airlines, parliament, government and the media in Italy will take part in the conference scheduled April 1-5, according to the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

The conference is due to discuss a number of questions related to tourism at the international level and means of helping Jordan promote its tourism industry and increase the volume of tourist groups arriving in the Kingdom, according to Petra.

The agreement was signed by Minister of Tourism Yanal Hikmat and the head of the Italian Tourist and Travel Agents Association.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Tourism has already embarked on preparations for the upcoming conference which, Petra said, will be beneficial to the Kingdom at the

information and tourism levels.

Petra said that the ministry has set up several committees representing the private and the public sectors to prepare for the upcoming conference and ensure its success. The committee has adopted a wide-ranging programme for the Italian visitors, taking them to tourist and archaeological sites with a view to orienting them on the treasures of Jordan.

The conference, according to Ministry of Tourism officials, will greatly boost Jordan's position in tourism in the wake of the Gulf

crisis, during which tourism practically stopped in the whole region.

The officials noted that over the past few months, the Kingdom witnessed the arrival of large groups of tourists from Europe, especially those heading towards the Aqaba sea side resort.

Petra said that the conference will open the way for Jordanian tourist and travel agents to meet with their Italian colleagues and discuss tourism marketing in Europe and other places of the world.

WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

★ Exhibition of paintings by Iraqi artist Mahmoud Ali Obaidi at Alia Art Gallery.

THEATRE

★ Arabic play entitled "Gelgemes" at the Royal Cultural Centre — 8 p.m.



Jamal Sarairoh

Communications minister tours TCC

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Communications Jamal Sarairoh visited the "operation room of the Telecommunications Corporation (TCC) where he inspected the work carried out by the corporation's technical teams.

Mr. Sarairoh issued directives to officials at the corporation to undertake all the necessary measures to guarantee normal work procedures and called on them to exert more efforts to provide telephone services to citizens all over the Kingdom, particularly in the stormy weather prevailing in the Kingdom.

The minister said that all the TCC's machines and equipment are operating as usual and affirmed that no problems or technical failures took place Saturday.

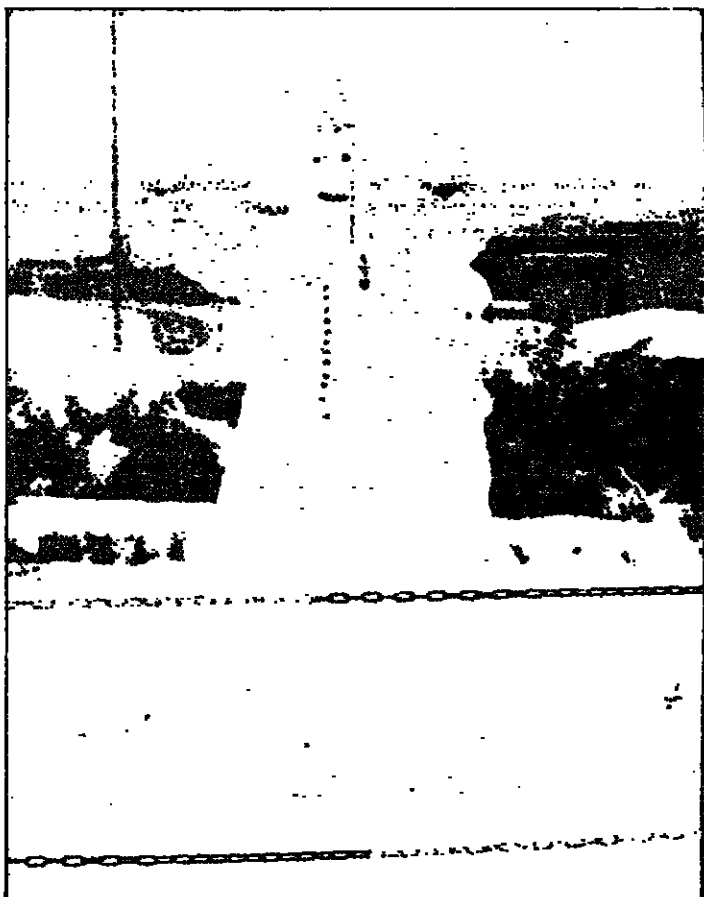
Mr. Sarairoh told the Jordan News Agency, Petra, that no major damages were reported in telephone lines in the Kingdom Saturday. He added that some minor failures took place during the day.

House to discuss worsening unemployment

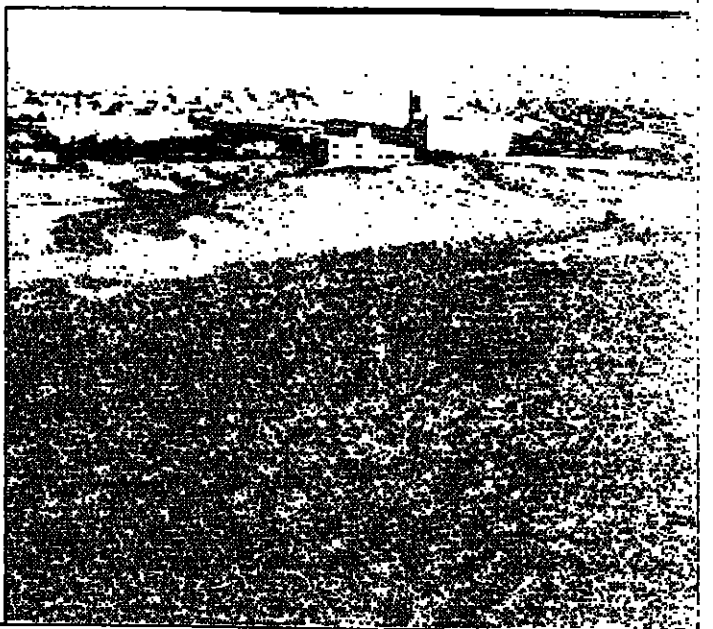
AMMAN (J.T.) — The Lower House of Parliament is due to meet today under the chairmanship of its speaker, Abdul Latif Arabiyat, and in the presence of the Cabinet led by Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker to discuss a host of questions and amendments to laws.

One of the sensitive issues to be tackled is a suggestion by 11 deputies for the creation of a parliamentary committee to deal with the worsening unemployment situation in the Kingdom and its negative impact on society. The 11 deputies had suggested that the committee should investigate the unemployment problem and offer proposed solutions.

According to parliament sources, the Lower House will also review a Financial Committee report about a loan from France to Jordan to finance the purchase of French services and goods. The loan totals 120 million francs.



WINTER WONDERLAND? — While some Jordanians took time to enjoy the snow and built a snowman, others were trying to keep warm or deal with the flooding resulting from the heavy rains of the last few days (photos by Yusef Al 'Allan)



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Visa of new order

THE FRENCH government played by the rules in deciding to free PFLP leader George Habash. It did not when its authorities ordered him detained while receiving medical treatment in France.

The detention order had sent shock waves throughout the Arab World alright. But beyond that it was of deep concern to many jurists and statesmen in the whole world. Even assuming the worst about the 65-year old leader of the second largest PLO faction, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), there can be no lawful cause for arresting or questioning him while legally present in France after obtaining the necessary permit from the concerned French authorities to enter their country to receive urgent medical treatment.

What would be the significance and implications of granting anybody an entry visa if after issuing it its bearer stands to be subject to detention, trial and possible incarceration for no offence committed while legally resident in the country. No one had challenged the validity of Dr. Habash's entry visa or claimed it was fraudulently obtained. Had this been the case, we could have understood an outcry about a very sick man seeking emergency medical attention in a very civilised country, noted for its high standards on human rights. But this was not the case. At a time when the international community has been trying to cultivate and nurture an active Palestinian involvement in the U.S.-sponsored peace process, the worst thing that could happen was to try to trick one Palestinian leader or another to accept safe haven and then apprehend him for prosecution. Such a policy was bound to reinforce the forces of extremism in the Palestinian camp and render the continuation of Palestinian participation in the peace negotiations that much more in doubt.

If the developed world, which is supposed to set the standards for developing countries, is going to begin to flout international norms and traditions, right, left and centre, then there is no hope whatsoever for the new international order to gain universal support. And if the Western outcry about terrorism is indeed genuine, why not begin with people like Yitzhak Shamir who by all Western accounts was among the hard core terrorists that ever roamed the surface of the earth? If they want more contemporary terrorists, why not apprehend Ariel Sharon, who has been confirmed as part and parcel of the Sabra and Shatila massacre?

It would be a good idea to establish an international tribunal to seek out and punish all those who had committed crimes against humanity. But to remain selective and biased in dealing with this grave issue would undermine the entire effort to bring terrorists and perpetrators of genocide to justice.

Paris really had no choice but to free Dr. Habash as soon as he was declared fit to travel. Otherwise, the French capital stood to be accused of double standards that already tarnished more than enough the much acclaimed new world order.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AL RA'I Arabic daily launched a bitter attack on France for detaining George Habash, the Palestinian leader, noting that France itself had committed crimes and terrorist actions against nations of the world while Mr. Habash and his men have been fighting the occupation of their lands. Mr. Habash's actions have been conducted within the framework of Palestinian resistance activity against the Israelis, but France's terrorist actions were directed against innocent people around the world, said the paper. The French government hijacked a plane carrying the leaders of the Algerian revolution, committed crimes against the Vietnamese and Algerian peoples and allowed Zionist agents to assassinate Arab leaders in France, the paper added. In the Gulf war, the French said that they would not attack Iraq, but would attack Iraqi forces in Kuwait to evict them from the emirate, it turned out that French war planes raided civilian targets, like hospitals and schools during the Gulf conflict, the paper pointed out. Now France is detaining an Arab leader who is unconscious and who has been allowed into Paris on humanitarian grounds, the paper continued. Should any harm occur to this dying man, what would the nations of the world think about a nation claiming to uphold fraternity and liberty, asked the paper. It said that it remains to be seen whether France would respond favourably to calls for changing its mind about its position and prove that Paris is the city of light liberty, culture and fraternity.

Now that the Madrid, Washington and Moscow meetings over the Middle East questions have ended without any results, the world's attention is being directed at Washington to see whether it would continue to support the Israeli stand, said Sawt Al Shaab daily. Until this moment, the Shamir government is going ahead with plans to set up settlements on Arab lands in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and until this minute, the U.S. has not taken a meaningful step to stop such an actions, said the paper. We can understand the reasons that stood behind Syria's refusal to take part in the Moscow parley and those that prevented the Palestinian delegation from participating in the talks, the paper continued. It said that the PLO, which represents the Palestinians, has expressed readiness to sign a peace treaty with Israel, should Israeli forces pull out from Arab land, the Arab countries have stated clearly their strong desire to follow suit and exchange land for peace. But instead of showing good intentions, Israel has escalated its malpractices against the Palestinians and stepped up its efforts to build more settlements on their land. The paper said that it is Washington's encouragement of Israel that promoted the latter to pursue its goals at a time when the Americans brag about the need for a peaceful settlement to be established on the basis of U.N. resolutions.

Sunday's Economic Pulse

Why we need an IMF adjustment programme

By Dr. Fahd Al Fares

Jordan will be the 46th developing country to undergo an IMF approved programme for economic adjustment. The letter of intent which embodies the economic, fiscal and monetary policies and targets of the programme over seven years, 1992-1998, has already been issued by the Council of Ministers of Taher Al Masi's outgoing government. Furthermore, the Ministry of Finance has already embarked on the implementation of the programme by imposing consumption tax on local production which caused an outcry among private sector industrialists that reminded us of the outcry among drivers in April 1989, caused by a surprise rise in fuel prices, following the adoption of the first phase of the IMF programme.

Naturally, the IMF programme is not popular. People don't like to make sacrifices and live within or below their means if they can live at least for the time being beyond those means. The only way to convince reasonable people to accept an immediate sacrifice, and tolerate lower standard of living, is to show them that the alternative could be much worse.

The political problem of the IMF programme is that the sacrifices are visible and come first, while the rewards are gradual and take time, and the people don't know how bad is the alternative if we go on borrowing or inflating our way in buying time.

In this respect, I would like to state some facts which should be

the basis for our economic policy and decision making at this stage:

1. Jordan is debt ridden. Debt service in interest and principal would amount to \$1.3 billion a year, i.e., over 100 per cent of commodity exports or 57 per cent of total earnings in foreign exchange.
2. The above debt service burden is far beyond the capacity of the Jordanian economy.
3. The lenders will not give us any form of relief or agree to forgo or reschedule their debt, or part of it, unless we have a convincing adjustment programme officially approved by the IMF.
4. Even before debt service, our foreign exchange earnings are less than enough to accommodate our basic needs for food, energy, raw material, equipment and spares and other essential services, unless we receive foreign grants and fresh loans, at least for few years to come.
5. The deficit in the budget could not be covered despite all the proper measures that can be taken to reduce expenditure and increase domestic revenue unless Jordan receives substantial foreign aid, at least for the remainder of this decade. Even Saudi Arabia committed itself not to extend financial assistance except within the guidelines of sound economic policies as defined by the

IMF.

6. The IMF, the World Bank, and all industrial countries will not grant or lend Jordan (or any other developing country) unless Jordan has sound economic policies acceptable to the international financial community.

Based on the above fundamental facts, which can be easily proved and documented beyond doubt, Jordan has no choice but to undergo an IMF type programme formally and to show official and popular determination in carrying it out in a firm and timely manner.

Luckily, the contents of the programme are scientific and sound. If the IMF programme was not imposed on us out of necessity we should impose it on ourselves by our choice. The reasons that delayed or prevented such policies from implementation were nothing but the lack of will on behalf of our politicians and leaders who prefer short term cheap popularity in the street over safeguarding the future viability of the economy and the country in the longer term.

Jordanian businessmen are advised not to waste their time in objecting to the adjustment process. They had better take the process as given and try to adjust their own behaviour to make the best of it. The stream is not reversible, and it is more beneficial and practical for decision makers to be in harmony with the trend rather than swimming against it.

Nuclear deterrence, pro and con

By Alon Pinkas

ISRAEL'S national security jargon is laden with a rich variety of clichés that dominate public discourse and official statements alike. "Masada shall not fall again..." Arabs understand only force... The reason is, of course, antisemitism, or "It's a security issue" are but samples from a long and widely-used — and abused — list.

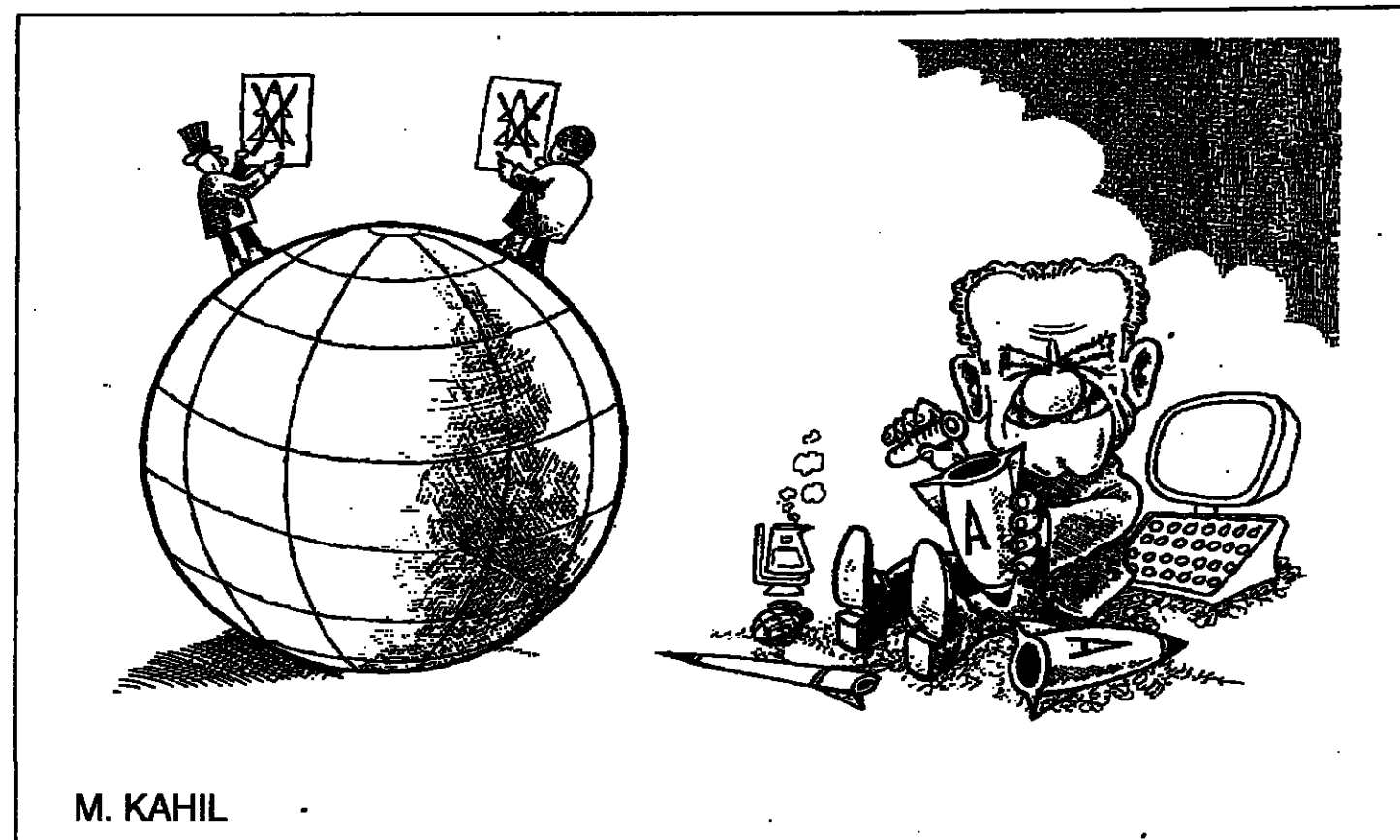
This unofficial book of useful and handy quotes also contains an entry on nuclear weapons and policy: "Israel will not be the first country to introduce nuclear weapons to the Middle East."

If the exact meaning and consequence of this posture is unclear or ambiguous to the reader, then the policy has succeeded. Israel's stance on the nuclear issue was designed and perfected over the years to achieve precisely this kind of confusion and a sense of vague intentions premised on unclear information. In strategic terminology, it is called tacit, or implicit, deterrence.

This line of argumentation, explicitly stating that Israel will not introduce the bomb unless someone else precedes it in doing so, is not merely an exposition of Israel's policy: it is Israel's nuclear strategy and doctrine.

What you see (actually, you never did), and what you hear and find difficult to construe, is essentially what you get. Israel has never admitted that it has nuclear weapons, but never bothered to deny foreign reports, such as the London International Institute for Strategic Studies, or former U.S. president Richard Nixon's recent remark that, based on the information he was exposed to while in the White House, Israel has nuclear capabilities.

White the world would like to know whether or not Israel has nuclear arms at its disposal, as far as Israel's strategic deterrence is concerned the real issue is whether this policy of vagueness is prudent. The question is, hypothetically, should Israel come out and declare that it has an unspecified nuclear capability, and thus throw the Arab World



into disarray, or, conversely, maintain the current facade?

It is very difficult to conduct a serious debate on the nuclear issue in a country where "radiation" (krina in Hebrew) is a damaging natural phenomenon that sunbathers should avoid and "second strike" is a rebound shot at goal following a successful save by the goalkeeper.

The primary elements in nuclear deterrence are the willingness to use this mass-destruction weapon to dissuade the enemy from belligerent actions and to maintain a "second strike capability," i.e., the ability to retaliate after a first strike.

In Israel's case, the above components do not apply.

Assuming that Israel officially declares that it has nuclear capability, it will then need to define the threshold of use, thus constraining its manoeuvring room. What if it does not deter the

Arabs from initiating a conventional war? Does Israel employ nuclear weapons in retaliation? Is the escalation effective in attaining more security or any other political goal?

If it is intended only as a second strike, the Arabs first have to acquire the nuclear option. Theoretically, this could lead to a balance of deterrence and equilibrium not dissimilar to the one that existed between the U.S. and the USSR, and maintained peace since 1949, when the Soviets detonated their first atomic bomb.

The most common reason d'être for using nuclear weapons in a hypothetical scenario is the case of virtual existential annihilation. In other words, die and take the Palestinians with you.

Philosophically, it has no utility value and is thus a fallacy. Politically, it is worthless and satisfies only the urge for revenge. More

importantly, it can be achieved by conventional means. The bombing of Tokyo or Dresden in the World War II did more damage than the atomic bomb on Hiroshima. So what is the point of having nuclear capability if you do not intend to use it and it has no convertible military value in the event that it is used?

The answer is that it is not perceived in this clinical and theoretical way by either Israel or the Arab World. As long as the Arab strategic objective is perceived by Israel as its ultimate destruction, nuclear weapons — hypothetically — are an insurance policy that should suffice to convince the Arabs that the cost will outweigh the effectiveness.

And as long as the Arabs perceive Israel as potentially constituting a nuclear threat, whose behaviour cannot be predicted or anticipated, they may think twice before implementing a military

grand strategy.

This tacit understanding is predicated on perceptions, and is attainable through the smoke-screen policy Israel has formulated. For all the Arabs know, Israel may not have any nuclear weapons. But by taking an American president seriously they must think it has; this renders an ambiguous and potentially unpredictable Israel an even greater deterrent and looming specter.

However, the issue of explicit or implicit nuclear doctrine is not confined to the realm of strategic and deterrence theory. There are very contemporary political considerations and implications for Israel. Generally, the issue revolves around the potent dangers of the Middle East undergoing nuclearisation.

The Arab World, and the Muslim World in general, approach the acquisition of nuclear capabilities through a global perspective. For them, the bomb is the

great equaliser, lifting their clout to parity with that of the "North," i.e., the industrialised Western and other rich and technologically-advanced countries.

The U.S. and Western Europe are not interested in the destabilising effects a nuclearised Middle East may have on the international system. So preventing proliferation is a top priority. The Arabs demand that Israel be the first candidate for supervision and inspection, because, they contend, it is the only country in the region with nuclear capabilities.

Thus, if Israel admits to possessing nuclear capability it exposes and renders itself vulnerable to international pressure. This is the reason why Egypt, ironically as it may seem to some, advocates an open-cards policy on the nuclear issue. By doing that, it may drive a wedge between Israel and the U.S. Congress which by law is required to relinquish aid to "nuclear countries" that have not signed the 1968 Non-Proliferation Treaty. Israel never signed that treaty, despite U.S. pressures to do so.

Israel, on the other hand, is saying that Libya, Iraq and Iran should be the countries under inspection, because they have previously threatened to use nuclear weapons if acquired. Only when the region creates a conventional arms control regime, could the denuclearisation phase be discussed. In the meantime, Israel will not be the first to introduce nuclear weapons to the region, so goes the official line, reflecting a solid consensus.

A policy of explicit nuclear deterrence has its advantages, but in the final analysis, both strategic and political, Israel can only lose in embracing such a posture. Conventional deterrence has so far provided the goods in a relatively successful way; not deterring war, but making it costly for the Arabs.

There are ample, conventional means to make the price exorbitantly high, and nuclear deterrence should be kept as a perceived last resort — or not — The Jerusalem Post.

Text of final declaration for U.N. summit

UNITED NATIONS (R) — Following is the text of a final declaration approved by 15 world leaders at Friday's first-ever Security Council summit.

It was read by British Prime Minister John Major, this month's rotating president of the Security Council.

THE MEMBERS of the Security Council have authorised me to make the following statement on their behalf.

The Security Council met at the headquarters of the United Nations in New York on 31 January 1992, for the first time at the level of heads of state and government. The members of the council considered, within the framework of their commitment to the United Nations charter, the responsibility of the Security Council in the maintenance of international peace and security.

The members of the Security Council consider that their meeting is a timely recognition of the fact that there are new favourable international circumstances under which the Security Council has begun to fulfil more effectively its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

A time of change

This meeting takes place at a time of momentous change. The ending of the cold war has raised hopes for a safer, more equitable and more human world. Rapid progress has been made, in many

regions of the world, towards democracy and responsive forms of governments, as well as towards achieving the purposes set out in the charter. The completion of the dismantling of apartheid in South Africa would constitute a major contribution to these purposes and positive trends, including to the encouragement of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Last year, under the authority of the United Nations, the international community succeeded in enabling Kuwait to regain its sovereignty and territorial integrity, which it had lost as a result of Iraqi aggression. The resolutions adopted by the Security Council remain essential to the restoration of peace and stability in the region and must be fully implemented. At the same time the members of the council are concerned by the humanitarian situation of the innocent civilian population of Iraq.

The members of the council support the Middle East peace process, facilitated by the Russian Federation and the United States, and hope that it will be brought to a successful conclusion on the basis of council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

They welcome the role the United Nations has been able to play under the charter in progress towards settling long-standing regional disputes, and will work for further progress towards their resolution. They applaud the valuable contribution being made by United Nations peace-keeping

forces now operating in Asia, Africa, Latin America and Europe.

The members of the council note that United Nations peace-keeping tasks have increased and broadened considerably in recent years. Election monitoring, human rights verification and the repatriation of refugees have in the settlement of some regional conflicts, at the request or with the agreement of the parties concerned, been integral parts of the Security Council's effort to maintain international peace and security. They welcome these developments.

The members of the council also recognise that change, however welcome, has brought new risks for stability and security. Some of the most acute problems result from changes to state structures. The members of the council will encourage all efforts to help achieve peace, stability and cooperation during these changes.

The international community therefore faces new challenges in the search for peace. All member states expect the United Nations to play a central role at this crucial stage. The members of the council stress the importance of strengthening and improving the United Nations to increase its effectiveness. They are determined to assume fully their responsibilities within the United Nations Organisation in the framework of the charter.

The absence of war and military conflicts among states does not in itself ensure international

peace and security. The non-military sources of instability in the economic, social, humanitarian and ecological fields have become threats to peace and security. The United Nations membership as a whole, working through the appropriate bodies, needs to give the highest priority to the solution of these matters.

Commitment to collective security

The members of the council pledge their commitment to international law and to the United Nations charter. All disputes between states should be peacefully resolved in accordance with the provisions of the charter.

The members of the council reaffirm their commitment to the collective security system of the charter to deal with threats to peace and to reverse acts of aggression.

The members of the council express their deep concern over acts of international terrorism and emphasise the need for the international community to deal effectively with all such acts.

Peacemaking and peacekeeping

To strengthen the effectiveness of these commitments, and in order that the Security Council should have the means to discharge its primary responsibility under the charter for the maintenance of international peace and security, the members of the council have decided on the fol-

lowing approach.

They invite the secretary-general to prepare, for circulation to the members of the United Nations by 1 July 1992, his analysis and recommendations on ways of strengthening and making more efficient within the framework and provision of the charter the capacity of the United Nations for preventive diplomacy, for peacemaking and for peacekeeping.

The secretary-general's analysis and recommendations could cover the role of the United Nations in identifying potential crises and areas of instability as well as the contribution to be made by regional organisations in accordance with chapter VIII of the United Nations charter in helping the work of the council. They could also cover the need for adequate resources, both material and financial. The secretary-general might draw on the lessons learned in recent United Nations peace-keeping missions to recommend ways of making more effective secretariat planning and operations. He could also consider how greater use might be made of his good offices, and of his other functions under the United Nations charter.

Disarmament, arms control and weapons of mass destruction

The members of the council, while fully conscious of the responsibilities of other organs of

the United Nations in the fields of disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation, reaffirm the crucial contribution which progress in these areas can make to the maintenance of international peace and security. They express their commitment to take concrete steps to enhance the effectiveness of the United Nations in these areas.

The members of the council underline the need for all member states to fulfil their obligations in relation to arms control and disarmament to prevent the proliferation in all its aspects of all weapons of mass destruction to avoid excessive and destabilising accumulations and transfers of arms and to resolve peacefully any problems concerning these matters threatening or disrupting the maintenance of regional and global stability. They emphasise the importance of the early ratification and implementation by the states concerned of all international and regional arms control arrangements, especially the START and CFE treaties.

The proliferation of all weapons of mass destruction constitutes a threat to international peace and security. The members of the council commit themselves to working to prevent the spread of technology related to the research for or production of such weapons and to take appropriate action to that end.

On nuclear proliferation, they

(Continued on page 5)

Doctor pleads for stopping the killing of Iraqi children

By Serene Halasa

Special to the Jordan Times
AMMAN — Two months after the Gulf war ended, Afaq Taleb Abed, an 11-year-old boy from Karbala, in northern Iraq, was a regular child. One day he was playing with a toy. Or so he thought. The "toy" blew up and took his right forearm with it.

He had severe internal bleeding and the doctors amputated what was left of his shattered arm.

But he was lucky, compared to the many Iraqi children hurt, disabled or killed during the bombing and because of the ongoing sanctions. Afaq was one of 34 children transferred to Germany for treatment by a group of German doctors.

After a successful operation, he received a prosthesis for the forearm. Today Afaq can function normally with the use of the artificial hand.

Dr. Margaret Fakhouri, a founding member of the German-based Essenea Doctor's Initiative (EDI), was one of the sponsors of the programme to help the children.

EDI, founded in February 1991 comprises seven doctors, five Germans and two Arabs, according to Dr. Fakhouri. It was founded for the sole purpose of helping civilians in Iraq, "mainly children who are suffering as a consequence of the ongoing United Nations embargo," she said.

Dr. Fakhouri, a pediatrician, worked at Saddam Children's Hospital in Baghdad till 1982, when she moved with her Jordanian husband to Germany to head the pediatric department at Elizabeth Hospital in Essen.

After visiting Iraq in March, July and December of last year, Dr. Fakhouri said she was convinced that urgent help was needed and embarked on a

mission to save the lives of Iraqi children who were dying from dehydration, diarrhoea, infectious diseases and malnutrition.

After acquiring permission from the United Nations representative in Iraq, Prince Sadruddin Agha Khan, EDI was certified as a non-governmental organisation and was allowed to use a Russian cargo plane to fly in 40 tonnes of food and medicine, she said.

Dr. Fakhouri's humanitarian work did not stop in Iraq. She toured many cities in Germany, where she spoke passionately of the suffering of the civilians as a consequence of the war and the embargo, trying to rally support.

Using slides showing malnourished and sick children, Dr. Fakhouri gave lectures explaining the deterioration in the health system in Iraq. It is critical that officials be convinced of the need to immediately lift the sanctions on Iraq in order to save the lives of innocent civilians, she would say.

"Before (the war), Iraq was able to produce penicillin, ampicillin, and some other basic antibiotics," said Dr. Fakhouri during a slide lecture she gave in Amman Tuesday. "With the war, production stopped, and (because of) the embargo no medicine, except through humanitarian help, (has) entered Iraq."

Speaking at the International Progress Organisation in Vienna, that discussed Iraq's human rights abuses, Dr. Fakhouri accused the U.N. and the entire international community of violating human rights in Iraq by continuing to enforce the U.N.-imposed embargo.

"Even if the embargo were lifted now, the people and especially the children would

suffer from this for a long time, not to say all their lives," Dr. Fakhouri said at the conference. "It is right, as some called it, (that) we will have to speak to the post-Gulf war generation."

Dr. Fakhouri explained that the war destroyed the electrical infrastructure in Iraq. Because of this, she said, simple laboratory tests cannot be conducted. The heavy allied bombing attack also cut electricity to refrigerators which were used to store medicines, damaging their contents. "In Iraq a good functioning health system existed before the war with many health centres distributed throughout the country. There were special centres to give a full-scale vaccination programme to the population," Dr. Fakhouri said. "But now, with the embargo and war, no vaccines are available anymore."

Renewing her appeal and call to save the lives of children in Iraq, Dr. Fakhouri said: "I am not a politician. I speak to you as a doctor and a human being, but I dare say that all laws stipulate that for people who kill by decision and in full conscience the punishment should be stronger."

"Don't you agree with me, that the continuing of the embargo means the death or killing of children who are innocent everyday? I do not know on what laws, religion or other principles this is based. Here in the West we speak a lot of human rights. But what remains of human rights if you prevent people from living a normal life, from finding food and medicine?"

"I believe not one of us has the right to do this... If every-one of us raises his voice against this situation, we could do something to stop the continuous killing of children," she concluded.

Algerian police hunt preachers

(Continued from page 1)

ment after he was ousted, could resign within days, said El Watan without citing sources. A ministerial shakeup would follow.

The leftist newspaper Le Matin cited fundamentalist sources as saying that Mr. Boudiaf was planning to name a new head of government.

It did not say who might replace Mr. Ghazali, a Western-oriented technocrat and prime mover behind the economic reforms undertaken since 1989 to shake up Algeria's moribund state-run economy.

Mr. Ghazali was in Davos, Switzerland for the world economic forum, an annual meeting of 1,500 political and financial leaders.

Meanwhile, Egypt signalled its clearest support yet for Algeria's new leaders on Saturday by welcoming the first meeting of the high council of state to travel abroad since it took power last month and cancelled democratic elections.

Tedjini Haddam, one of the five members of the collective presidency, held short separate meetings with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and Foreign Minister Amr Moussa.

"President Mubarak told (Haddam) that Egypt supports the Algerian government and people without limits," Mohamed Mahjoub, Egypt's minister of religious affairs, told reporters.

Mr. Mubarak hoped Algeria would soon overcome present problems and emerge from its crisis unified and strong, said Mr. Mahjoub, who attended Mr. Haddam's meeting with the Egyptian president.

Secular and pro-Western Egypt has trod gingerly since the high council came to power in Algeria and called off elections which Muslim fundamentalists were poised to win.

The government cannot openly approve a move against democracy and a religion to which the vast majority of its citizens belong. But diplomats say it is nervous about the spread of fundamentalism.

"No-one wants an Islamic party to rule but they cannot say it publicly," former Egyptian diplomat Tahsin Bashir said. "The object is not politically to endorse cancellation of elections but to stabilise the situation without getting involved."

Mr. Haddam said after the meeting: "I came to thank President Mubarak, whom we consider a symbol of Arab and Islamic dignity, for Egypt's support to Algeria... We hope the good ties between Egypt and Algeria will be further strengthened."

Mr. Haddam, who was imam of the Paris mosque before being appointed to the five-man high council, was due to receive a prize later at "preachers' day," a ceremony the Egyptian government holds every year to honour those it deems have propagated a correct form of the Islamic faith.

He said the visit had been planned for several months but had only been finalised recently.

Mr. Haddam has been prominent in Muslim-Christian dialogues and was a founder member of a human rights group in Algeria. Observers say he is not politically powerful and was included to help the new leadership present an Islamic face to its people which was also acceptable to the West.

Algeria Radio said on Saturday

Palestinians ensured full participation

"(We gained) recognition that the Palestinian people cannot accept unfair conditions that negate their identity or their national rights," she said.

Even after the Moscow talks, the debate within Palestinian ranks, including the Palestine Liberation Organisation, PLO, continued over the wisdom of not taking part in the talks.

But Dr. Ashrawi and the Palestinian delegates appeared satisfied with the Palestinian performance and convinced that the Palestinian position

was the only way to draw the world attention to the importance of Palestinian representation.

The Palestinian decision in Moscow was aimed at taking the international community, especially the cosponsors, to task regarding their position towards the Palestinian people, the delegates indicated.

"This was a matter of principle that defines who will deal with the Palestinians... as working groups, as individuals, as refugees, or as we see it as a people that has distinct and national identity," said Dr. Ashrawi.

Bush, Yeltsin formalise relationship

(Continued from page 1)

employ 2,000 nuclear specialists. Mr. Yeltsin said he had already radically improved their salaries to prevent them from defecting. U.S. officials were concerned that Soviet military scientists could seek positions in Middle East nations such as Iran or Libya.

Beforehand, Mr. Bush was asked about Mr. Yeltsin's proposal that Russia participate in developing a missile defence system similar to the U.S. strategic defence initiative, or "Star Wars."

"We're prepared to discuss President Yeltsin's ideas that he announced the other day in detail. It has a lot of interest to us."

Mr. Bush said he had discussed the matter with Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney.

Mr. Bush, in his State of the Union address Tuesday night, had announced the United States

would stop building nuclear bombs, cancel the Midgetman intercontinental ballistic missile and scale back the planned purchase of B-2 Stealth bombers.

He said he was prepared to make large reductions in U.S. nuclear arsenals if Russia and its Commonwealth of Independent States partners would reciprocate.

He offered to eliminate 1,500 of the 2,000 nuclear warheads on U.S. land-based missiles, reduce by one-third the number of warheads on sea-based missiles and convert some bombers to non-nuclear roles.

Mr. Yeltsin responded with his own sweeping ideas — to slash long-range nuclear warheads to between 2,000 and 2,500 on each side. He said Russia had taken off about 600 strategic land and sea based missiles, and stopped building long-range cruise missiles and would destroy its existing cruise missiles if Washington does the same.

about 30 people were wounded in clashes in several cities, the most violent around the Sunna mosque in the Algiers FIS bastion of Bab El Oued.

"The state was not bluffing," said Le Matin newspaper, as Algerians counted the cost of the new leadership's determination to end the use of mosques for politics.

Political preachers in the "houses of God" is banned by law. But for the past three years the FIS has used many of Algeria's nearly 10,000 mosques to recruit support and issue instructions in pursuit of its goal of an Islamic state.

The authorities have also put an end to mass gatherings of FIS militants outside mosques each Friday, saying the streets must be kept clear.

Algeria security headquarters said 20 people were wounded in three FIS strongholds — Bab El Oued, Harrach and Hussein-Dey. They included three security force members. Twenty-five people were also arrested, including two imams (preachers).

"Despite warning shots, provocations persisted," requiring "a firm and prompt riposte by security forces," it said.

In the eastern city of Constantine, where officials said two people were wounded and 29 arrested, an imam sought for "virulent" preaching escaped when supporters blocked police moving in. He is being hunted.

Two Jordanians and a Palestinian were among those arrested, city officials told the Algerian news agency (APS).

The international Muslim Foundation of Canada, in a state-

Syria protests to Germany over tanks

(Continued from page 1)

shipping tanks on the Godewind, stopped on orders from Chancellor Helmut Kohl's office.

The Bonn opposition also called on the government to prosecute the shipping company, even though the Soviet-built tanks were sent by a firm in Czechoslovakia.

"The transporters of death must be charged, not just the producers," said Norbert Gansel, national security spokesman for the opposition Social Democrats.

"Czechoslovakia wanted a quarter of a billion marks (\$145 million) for the tanks... almost exactly the amount... made available to Syria last year after the Gulf war," he said on German television.

Bonn's ministry for economic cooperation, which is responsible for German aid, denied Mr. Gansel's allegation. It also said that Germany granted Syria just 100 million marks (\$60 million) after

the Gulf war, and this amount was earmarked for commodities to be purchased in Germany only.

Mr. Vogel said the Bonn government had begun investigating a possible violation of export laws this month after learning from newspaper reports that Czechoslovakian tanks were being loaded on the Godewind.

Federal prosecutors in Kiel were examining whether the German shippers had violated export laws, Mr. Vogel said, adding that the company, Karl-Heinz Baase of Hoersten in north Germany, had applied for clearance after the ship set sail.

The German parliament last week approved tighter export laws after Bonn was embarrassed by disclosures that German firms had supplied Iraq and Libya with weapons technology.

Under the law, Mr. Vogel said, German shippers as well as manufacturers required export authorisation.

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U.N. summit declaration

(Continued from page 4)

note the importance of the decision of many countries to adhere to the non-proliferation treaty and emphasise the integral role in the implementation of that treaty of fully effective IAEA safeguards, as well as the importance of effective exports controls. The members of the council will take appropriate measures in the case of any violations notified to them by the IAEA.

On chemical weapons, they support the efforts of the Geneva conference with a view to reaching agreement on the conclusion, by the end of 1992, of a universal convention, including a verification regime, to prohibit chemical weapons.

On conventional armaments, they note the general assembly's vote in favour of a United Nations register of arms transfers as a first step, and in this connection

recognise the importance of all states providing all the information called for in the General Assembly's resolution.

In conclusion the members of the Security Council affirm their determination to build on the initiative of their meeting in order to secure positive advances in promoting international peace and security. They agree that the United Nations secretary-general has a crucial role to play. The members of the council express their deep appreciation to the outgoing secretary-general, his excellency Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, for his outstanding contribution to the work of the United Nations, culminating in the signature of the El Salvador peace agreement. They welcome the new secretary-general, his excellency Dr. Boutros Boutros Ghali, and note with satisfaction his intention to strengthen and

improve the functioning of the United Nations. They pledge their full support to him, and undertake to work closely with him and his staff in fulfilment of their shared objectives, including a more efficient and effective United Nations system.

The members of the council agree that the world now has the best chance of achieving international peace and security since the foundation of the United Nations. They undertake to work, in close cooperation with other United Nations member states in their efforts to achieve this, as well as to address urgently all the other problems, in particular those of economic and social development, requiring the collective response of the international community. They recognise that peace and prosperity are indivisible and that lasting peace and stability require effective international cooperation for the eradication of poverty and the promotion of a better life for all in larger freedom.

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Mideast demand sends Swiss watch exports to new record

BIENNE, Switzerland (AP) — Swiss watch exports, buoyed by a strong revival in the Middle East, rose to a new high of 6,852 billion francs (\$4,758 billion) last year, the industry's federation said Friday.

Foreign sales were up 1.1 per cent from 1990, the previous record year.

The figures include models ranging from the low-price, hugely popular plastic-case Swatch to luxury precious-metal timepieces.

Exports to the Middle East rebounded sharply after a slump in 1990 due to the Gulf war, the Swiss Watchmakers' Federation said. Sales rose 47.5 per cent in the United Arab Emirates and 27.7 per cent in Saudi Arabia.

Sales in Japan, Switzerland's toughest competitor in the low-end market, increased 2.4 per cent, the federation said.

Thailand recorded a 42 per cent increase. In Europe, turnover increased notably in Austria,

Italy and Germany.

Sales dropped in Singapore, Taiwan and Hong Kong, and in France and Britain. U.S. sales fell 1.4 per cent.

Exports of precious-metal watches, which make up about half of the total, declined three per cent last year.

Switzerland accounted for more than 50 per cent of the value of world watch sales last year, the federation said.

Sri Lanka remains world's largest exporter of tea

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka (AP) — Sri Lanka has retained its place as the world's largest tea exporter for the second consecutive year, the board officials said Friday.

Although the final export figures for last year are still being compiled, early reports show that 1991's tea exports have surpassed the 1990 record of 215 million kilograms and is ahead of its main competitor India, said the officials, speaking on condition of anonymity.

India has produced more tea than Sri Lanka, but most of it is consumed at home, while the bulk of Sri Lankan teas is ex-

ported.

Sri Lanka's tea production also reached an all time high in 1991 with 240 million kilograms. In 1990, total tea production was 233 million kilograms.

The earnings from tea exports have, however, fallen short by about \$6 million due to the decline in tea prices which has been attributed to Sri Lanka losing two of her largest tea buyers, Iraq and the former Soviet Union.

"Financial dislocations in some of our major tea buying countries brought about a sudden drying-up buying orders at a time when

production was in the rise in Sri Lanka and other major tea producing countries," said Forbes and Walker, a leading broker in its tea report for January.

In 1990, Sri Lanka exported 215.6 million kilograms of tea placing herself as the world's largest tea seller. India exported about 199 million kilograms that year.

The total earnings from tea exports that year stood at over \$20 million. Tea is the single largest export commodity in Sri Lanka bringing in annually about \$500 million.

African leaders pledge to move towards regional common market

LUSAKA (R) — Leaders of 18 African nations pledged Friday to move quickly towards establishing a regional common market.

The leaders of the Preferential Trade Area (PTA) of eastern and southern Africa said their group would take the initiative to merge with the 10-member Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC), a separate economic bloc which shares some members with the PTA.

"The PTA authority resolved that the PTA and SADCC be merged into a single common market for eastern and southern Africa," the leaders said at a two-day conference on economic cooperation.

During their conference, the leaders said the existence of two economic blocs with basically the same aims of coordinating development was a waste of resources and a hindered progress.

In Mozambique, a two-day SADCC meeting with international donors which also ended

Friday did not discuss the merger of the two blocs but a communiqué said that SADCC had called for increased consultations and coordination.

SADCC, which groups Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe, was formed in 1980 to lessen these countries' economic dependence on South Africa.

The PTA, which includes the above countries except Botswana, along with Burundi, Comoros, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mauritius, Rwanda, Somalia and Uganda, was founded in late 1981 to promote intra-regional trade and plans to establish a common market by the year 2000.

The PTA communiqué said all its members had to take concrete steps to break trade barriers and boost intra-regional trade, currently estimated at about 10 per cent of the region's trade with the whole world.

It said the PTA would work speedily to ensure a common market was established by the target year.

Canadian government freezes spending, hiring

OTTAWA (R) — Canada's Conservative government has frozen spending and hiring because the recession gripping the country for nearly two years has cut revenues and pushed the budget deficit higher than forecast.

Finance Minister Don Mazankowski said the freeze applies to all government departments, and government-run companies are expected to follow suit.

"We are not prepared to accept a deterioration in our fiscal (financial) situation without taking steps to stay close to our deficit track," he told a news conference.

The government said it will review all new capital projects and will proceed only with those required for health, safety or essential services.

Canada's economy officially slipped into recession in April, 1990 after booming throughout the latter part of the 1980s.

Public service wages were frozen last year as an austerity measure that led to a national strike by civil servants.

The government also froze discretionary spending as well.

"The freeze will affect all workers and will be felt everywhere in the federal government throughout the country," said Gilles Loiseleur, president of the government's Treasury Board.

Mr. Mazankowski said the government hopes to hold the budget deficit for the financial year ending on March 31, 1992, to under 31.5 billion Canadian dollars (\$26.9 billion).

Last February, the government predicted the budget deficit would be 30.5 billion Canadian dollars (\$26 billion).

The government has downgraded estimates for growth in 1992 to 2.7 per cent, from 3.5 per cent, with the economy only picking up in the second half of 1992.

Although interest rates have dropped, sharply reducing the costs of carrying government debt, Mr. Mazankowski said that has not been enough to compensate for weaker than expected growth.

He said Canada, which relies heavily on trade, has been badly hit by the downturn in economies around the world, but particularly by the downturn in the United States.



Don Mazankowski

The Conference Board of Canada, a private research institute, said that Canada's ability to compete in international markets continues to slip despite new policies of the federal government.

Although the government has achieved its main objective of reducing inflation, it has taken a severe recession and significant loss of employment to get there, the agency said.

"With the economy faltering, there is little that policy makers can do to stimulate the economy given current constraints on monetary and fiscal (financial) policy," Ranga Chand, a Conference Board analyst said in a report.

Analysts say that if the deficit rises too high, foreign borrowers will desert the country.

A rising budget deficit is also a negative signal to bond rating agencies, which can lower debt rating and make it more expensive for governments to borrow.

Unemployment in Bulgaria said nearing critical level

SOFIA (R) — Bulgarian unemployment will reach crisis level by the end of this year, trade union officials have said.

Labour Minister Vekli Vancov said more than 750,000 Bulgarians would be without jobs by the end 1992 — 15.6 per cent of the 4.8 million workforce.

Union leaders warned this would push the normally stoical Bulgarians past their level of tolerance.

"When such a critical minimum is jumped over, social tension will reach a peak and stormy consequences could be expected," said Diana Danyanova, deputy chairman of the National Trade Union Federation.

Bulgaria, once the most loyal ally of the former Soviet Union, lost its main markets in the collapse of the Comecon, the economic organisation that grouped the former Soviet Union and its East European satellites.

More than 24 million poor Americans get food stamps

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — The number of Americans seeking government help to buy groceries surged again in November, pushing participation in the food stamp programme to a record 24.56 million people, the U.S. Agriculture Department (USDA) reported Friday.

It was the eighth time in nine months that an enrollment record was set for the programme, now reaching nearly one in 10 Americans.

USDA said November enrollment was up 400,000 from a month earlier and 3.27 million from a year ago.

Annual net income cannot exceed \$13,404 for a family of four to qualify for food stamps. The average food stamp benefit was \$68.98 a month worth of groceries in November.

In the Washington area ground beef costs about \$4.10 a kilogram. In bargain stores, small grapefruit can be had four for a dollar.

Representative Tony Hall, chairman of the House of Representatives Select Committee on Hunger, called the numbers "a catalog of despair. This litany of need continues to document the erosion of the middle class."

"These figures have confirmed the worst fears of most Americans — the economy is getting worse, a lot worse," added Senator Patrick Leahy, chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee.

Since the beginning of Bush administration, food stamp participation has increased by 5.79 million — from 18.77 million in February 1989 to 24.56 million in November, averaging an increase of 39,000 each week, the Senate Agriculture Committee said.

Rod Leonard, executive director of the Community Nutrition Institute, predicted that the pace of growth in the programme this fall will push participation above the 25-million mark in December or January.

USDA's Food and Nutrition

Service, which administers the food stamp programme, said the increase in November was "not entirely unexpected" because participation traditionally rises in the cooler months.

"These numbers show that the food stamp programme is available as a cushion for people facing difficult times," the agency said in a statement. "The food stamp programme is doing what it was designed to do."

The number of children receiving a free or reduced-price school lunch also continued to climb in November.

There were 12.9 million children from poor or low-income families receiving a free or reduced-price hot lunches in November, compared with 12.8 million in October and 12.2 million in November 1991.

Meanwhile, the U.S. government's key economic forecasting gauge kept falling in December, adding to evidence that a lengthy may lie ahead before the United States emerges from recession.

The index of leading indicators, designed to forecast growth in three to six months, dipped by 0.3 per cent in December in a second consecutive decline, the Commerce Department said.

Adding to the bad news were a plunge in new-home sales and fresh signs that consumers are depressed about the economy.

The cascade of bad economic news drew attention to the spreading weakness affecting much of U.S. industry that economists say means a lengthy struggle key to escape a downturn that began in mid-1990.

"Today's report belies assertions that the economy is showing signs of coming out of what is now a weak recession into a nice recovery," said Lawrence Hunter, an economist with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. "Overall, the economy's health is still very poor."

Most expectations had been that the index, which is supposed to predict the economy's direc-

tion six to nine months ahead, would become positive. But several measures in it were hurt by a steep and unexpected five per cent decline in durable goods orders.

Contracts for new production equipment fell as did demand for consumer items and factories' backlogs of unfilled orders, all warning signs that job prospects remain shaky.

Everyone is convinced that recovery is imminent, but I don't think that's the message we're getting from this series," said Stephen Slifer, an economist at Lehman Government Securities Inc. in New York.

"At the absolute best, the economy will turn upward in the second quarter," Mr. Slifer said.

"The leading index also declined 0.3 per cent in November and barely moved up 0.1 per cent in October. It has been virtually flat or in decline since August. A major reason is a lack of consumer optimism about the economy's directions and there was no sign that lifting."

The University of Michigan's influential survey of consumer confidence reportedly showed consumers grew more gloomy during January. Its index, released to paying subscribers and not to the public, fell to 59.1 per cent in January from 61.5 per cent in December, economists said.

The Commerce Department said sales of new single-family homes fell a sharp 6.6 per cent in December and sagged for the full year to their lowest level since the 1982 recession.

Industry analysts hope stimulative measures in President George Bush's "growth package," especially a proposed \$5,000 tax credit for first-time homebuyers, will build a fire under sales relatively soon.

Chicago Purchasing Managers said their monthly survey for January "puts forth a relatively negative outlook for many struggling companies."

Russian reform plan comes under two-pronged attack

MOSCOW (R) — Russia's economic reform programme came under attack from two sides Friday after the central bank chief said the country needed to print more money and a top economist warned of hyperinflation.

In an interview published in Sovetskaya Rossiya newspaper, central bank chairman Georgy Matyukhin said Russia remained desperately short of money, even though bank-note printing presses have been working flat out for months.

Economist Grigory Yavlinsky, author of a far-reaching plan to create a market economy in 500 days, told Rossiya newspaper the current reform programme would invariably lead to hyperinflation or economic and political collapse.

"I have big doubts about what is being done," Rossiya quoted Mr. Yavlinsky as saying. The newspaper article was summarised by ITAR-TASS news agency.

Russia launched the first stage of an ambitious economic reform programme on Jan. 2, freeing most prices from years of government control in the first big step away from a centrally planned economy.

Prices have been rising ever since and many economists say official forecasts of 400 per cent inflation in the first quarter of this year are hugely understated.

But in comments which will rekindle a row between the central bank and the government, Mr. Matyukhin said Russia was short of 10 billion roubles.

"Printing facilities cannot cope," he pointed out.

Western economists say sharply higher monetary growth will only add to inflationary pressure.

But Mr. Matyukhin said freeing prices without ensuring proper competition among firms meant that producers enjoying a monopoly were cutting production and keeping prices high.

His comments have been borne out by media reports describing how sharp falls in purchases by

consumers unable to afford high prices were prompting factories to curb output rather than driving prices down.

ITAR-TASS quoted an official at a Moscow meat processing plant Friday as saying stores were sending back goods because consumers were not buying them.

An exception is Moscow's McDonald's restaurant, where management will slash the price of a big Mac hamburger by 28 per cent Saturday in reaction to a winter of economic hardship.

"We have a loyal customer base and, starting tomorrow and throughout the winter, we are going to lower our prices by 28 per cent," Vice-Chairman George Cobon said.

Mr. Matyukhin said calls from international organisations to rein in monetary growth to control inflation were unrealistic. The Russian government and its economic specialist Yegor Gaidar support the calls.

"It is all very well for those guys from the West to sit overseas and think, but we have reality here," Mr. Matyukhin said.

"At present trade, industry and agriculture, not to mention the population, are without money. We have nothing to pay salaries with," he said.

Russia remained a cash economy, he said. "Our so-called new businessmen have always

preferred and still prefer to make all payments in cash because it makes it easier to pay bribes."

Komsomolskaya Pravda newspaper said this week Russia's printing presses were churning out 20 billion roubles a month, bringing cash in circulation to about 600 billion roubles.

In 1991, the Soviet Union printed 90.5 billion roubles, up from 25.9 billion in 1990 and 18 billion in 1989, it said.

Mr. Yavlinsky said the risk of hyperinflation was likely to threaten moves to privatisation.

Former Soviet republics should conclude a treaty to boost cooperation rather than each moving its separate economic ways, he said. Following the fragmentation of the former Soviet Union, Russian statehood might collapse as well, he said.

"Economic cooperation is very important, as is the help of the world's financial organisations," he said.

A U.S. central banker said Friday that Russia and the other former Soviet republics must create proper sound currencies before the West provides a stabilisation fund to support currency convertibility.

Russian officials have been seeking \$5 to \$6 billion to back the rouble, which they would like to make convertible later this year.

TWA files for bankruptcy with plan to cut debt

NEW YORK (R) — Trans World Airlines (TWA) Inc. filed for bankruptcy protection Friday, setting off on a strategy that aims to avoid the turbulence that has claimed a host of U.S. competitors.

Owner and financier Carl Icahn spent months mapping out the route for his company, cajoling various creditors to take an equity stake in the airline in return for slashing TWA's junk-bond debt by nearly two-thirds.

The plan leaves Mr. Icahn, who made a fortune on takeover bids in the 1980s, with a vastly smaller stake in the carrier. It marks a stinging defeat in his attempt to become known as a captain of industry rather than a corporate raider.

"I've lost on TWA," Icahn said at a news conference. "They were the worst investment I made in the last decade."

TWA Friday filed bankruptcy papers and a reorganisation plan that lays out how the company will emerge as a more healthy competitor. With all the creditors already on board, the plan faces a good chance of winning bankruptcy court approval quickly.

The plan will reduce TWA's debts by \$1 billion and cut interest payments by about \$150 million a year. In return, Mr. Icahn is cutting his 90 per cent stake to between 15 and 40 per cent, he said.

If the plan goes off without a hitch, TWA will rank as one of the handful of troubled U.S. airlines that entered bankruptcy and emerged with their jobs intact. Mr. Icahn hopes the move will take six months to complete.

Three other airlines, Pan Am Corp., Eastern Airlines Inc. and Midway Airlines Inc., shut down file in bankruptcy, unable to work out deals to cut debts, win funding or stem the losses that had crippled them for years.

Slovenia devalues tolar by 15 per cent

BELGRADE (R) — Slovenia announced Friday it was devaluing its currency, the tolar, by just over 15 per cent, Belgrade-based Tanjug News Agency reported.

The Bank of Slovenia said the new official rate would be 44.11 tolar to one Deutschmark instead of 37.32 tolar, Tanjug said. The 15.4 per cent devaluation took effect from Saturday.

The Deutschmark is the most widely used foreign currency in Yugoslavia. Slovenia and its neighbour Croatia, both former Yugoslav republics, won international recognition as independent states on Jan. 15.

Slovenia's monthly inflation rate fell in January to 10.2 per cent from December's 15.5 per cent, the official statistics office said Thursday, forecasting the rate would hold steady at 10.2 per cent next month.

Slovenia introduced the tolar in October and Croatia set up its own currency, the Croatian dinar, last December.

Yugoslavia, which includes the republics of Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro and Macedonia, devalued its currency, the dinar, by 80 per cent Sunday.

Officials this week put Yugoslavia's inflation at a monthly rate of 25 per cent.

Zambia devalues kwacha

LUSAKA (R) — Zambia Friday devalued its kwacha currency by almost 25 per cent and announced plans to liberalise foreign controls in measures aimed at reducing inflation.

Finance Minister Emmanuel Kasonde said in his 1992 budget address to parliament that the government would soon licence firms to operate a free market exchange "when the appropriate machinery has been set in motion."

"So long as our economy depends on copper sales to a significant degree, we will have to continue devaluing the kwacha to keep their (copper producers) books in the black," he told parliament.

Zambia, which receives more than 90 per cent of its foreign exchange from copper exports, has said copper production was being affected by rising costs and lack of spares.

"With each increase in costs in the mining industry owing to domestic inflation, the time for a devaluation is brought closer," Mr. Kasonde said.

"They way forward then is to free the exchange rate from daily control by the (central) Bank of Zambia and to let the market set the rate."

"I therefore propose that with

effect from midnight tonight (Friday), the kwacha be pegged at 125 kwacha per U.S. dollar, which I plan to hold stable for some time," Mr. Kasonde said.

The kwacha, at an official exchange rate of 94.00 kwacha to a dollar, depreciated by 85 per cent in 1991 under a weekly crawling devaluation system.

The minister said he would soon create capital markets to cater for long-term lending to boost large investments.

Mr. Kasonde said he "intended to balance the budget within two years," saying his monetary measures were aimed at cutting inflation to 60 per cent from last year's 118 per cent.

He said he hoped to reduce money supply growth to 25 per cent from 98.2 per cent in 1991, blaming the high rise on un-budgeted expenditures.

"High inflation is undoing what we are trying to achieve through devaluation," the minister said.

Mr. Kasonde presented a budget of 90.3 billion kwacha (\$72 million) at 125 kwacha to the dollar compared with 70.4 billion authorised in 1991. Recurrent expenditure for the year stands at 64.8 billion kwacha while the budget deficit.

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Your support by attending will be greatly appreciated.

The Board of Directors

Russia to recognise Croatia and Slovenia next week

UNITED NATIONS (R) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin has said Russia would recognise the breakaway Yugoslav republics of Slovenia and Croatia next week.

"We are conducting dialogue with leaders of Slovenia and Croatia, and by the end of next week we'll recognise those two states," Mr. Yeltsin told a news conference after a summit meeting of the Security Council.

The two republics, which announced their independence last June, have already been recognised by many European and other countries.

Neither the United States nor the United Nations has recognised the two Balkan republics, where sporadic fighting has continued despite a U.N.-brokered ceasefire agreement.

The United Nations has sent 50 observers to monitor the ceasefire but has run into opposition from Serb leaders in Croatia, as well as from Croats, to a plan to dispatch a 10,000-member U.N. peacekeeping force.

In Belgrade, Yugoslav leaders prepared for more tough talks Saturday to break a deadlock over sending U.N. peacekeepers to the war zone.

Yugoslavia's state presidency spent more than 15 hours Friday in a closed-door meeting with pro-Serb chiefs from across the country to persuade the Serbian hardliners from Croatia that deployment of 10,000 United Na-

tions troops would help bring peace to the country after months of fighting.

Opposition to the plan by Milan Babic, defiant president of Croatia's Serb-dominated enclave of Krajina, scuppered attempts by U.N. envoy Marrack Goulding to win agreement from all sides during a five-day mission this week.

But diplomats said Croatia had also raised objections to the plan during Mr. Goulding's talks in the Croatian capital, Zagreb.

The federal Yugoslav newspaper Borba, quoting sources close to the presidency, said Mr. Babic may soften his position but he was an "unpredictable" character.

"They think that Babic will make concessions and accept the arrival of U.N. peace forces ... but it might not all go the presidency way," Borba reported. The paper's presidential sources have often proved accurate in the past.

The meeting, expected to resume later Saturday, was called by the Yugoslav presidency after warning Mr. Babic he could face unspecified sanctions if he continued to block the plan.

Mr. Babic responded by warning that any such action would "cause an uprising by Serbs everywhere."

The U.N. is trying to end seven months of fighting between Croatian forces and Serb irregulars backed by the Yugoslav army.

More than 6,000 people have been killed in the bloodshed, but a 29-day ceasefire has held despite some violations.

Croatian radio Saturday reported shooting in the suburbs of Osijek in eastern Croatia, and said explosions were heard near the city during the night.

A commander of Serb irregulars said Friday one Croatian fighter died when Croats attacked the village of Sodelovic in eastern Croatia, Belgrade-based Tanjug News Agency reported.

Serbs now control about a third of Croatia's territory, but many living there say they want no part of the Croatian state that won international recognition on Jan. 15.

Mr. Babic rejected the U.N. plan arguing that while Serbs would be disarmed Croatia's National Guard would keep their weapons.

Diplomats said they believed Croatian President Franjo Tudjman was seeking to regain administrative control of territory the breakaway republic had lost to Serbian forces.

A senior member of Mr. Tudjman's ruling Croatian Democratic Union said this week Croatia would win back its land with the help of the U.N. or by armed force.

Meanwhile, Italian authorities have asked magistrates to trace the Yugoslav military commanders guilty of shooting down an

EC helicopter and, if necessary, charge them with murder, a Justice Ministry spokesman said Saturday.

He said Italy believed the attack was a political crime.

A helicopter carrying European Community monitors was shot down over Croatia on Jan. 7. Four Italian soldiers and one Frenchman died in the incident.

Spokesman Massimiliano Belli said Justice Minister Claudio Martelli had asked Rome magistrates late Friday to open an investigation to identify those who ordered the attack.

A ministry statement said the pilot of the federal plane that downed the helicopter had acted not on his own initiative but on order from his commanders.

These federal commanders, the statement said, were keen to scupper EC monitoring missions prior to the dispatch of a United Nations peacekeeping force to the civil war battlefield.

Punishing the culprits was apparently not an aim of the Yugoslav authorities in Belgrade, the statement added.

"The event must be seen as a political crime... and as such punishable on the request of the justice minister."

"As keeping the peace in Europe ... is a fundamental interest of the (Italian) state, the action of the Yugoslav military aimed at harming that interest is objectively political," the statement said.

Bush criticises Chinese human rights record

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — President George Bush raised U.S. concerns about human rights abuses in a rough talk with Chinese Premier Li Peng, who oversaw the bloody crackdown against pro-democracy demonstrators in Peking in 1989.

Mr. Bush told Mr. Li: "The record of the Chinese government on human rights was insufficient insofar as we were concerned," according to Secretary of State James Baker. Mr. Li gave no ground, Mr. Baker said.

The 20-minute meeting Friday came after both attended an unprecedented U.N. Security Council session where Mr. Bush warned that "the specter of mass destruction remains all too real" even though the threat of global nuclear war has diminished.

Mr. Baker, briefing reporters later on the flight home to Washington, said the meeting was "very serious, very businesslike, direct."

Mr. Li was unrelenting and referred the president to his remarks before the General Assembly, in which he declared that China "is opposed to interference in the internal affairs of other countries, using the human rights issue as an excuse."

"That's not acceptable under our standards," Mr. Baker said. "That's their view and that's their approach."

He said besides human rights the topics were trade and the proliferation of nuclear weapons. The administration has been trying to block China from selling missiles to Syria.

Mr. Baker said Mr. Li did not provide an expected letter outlining how China would formally comply with an international agreement limiting the export of missile technology. He said they promised a written reply soon.

Mr. Baker said that if they went as far as the United States hopes, this country would lift sanctions imposed last summer against the export of computers and satellites to China.

"What they said tonight was, 'we will be answering your letter with a letter of our own.' We haven't seen that letter so we're not in a position to judge its sufficiency right now. They said that it would be responsive to my letter, but as I say we haven't seen it."

If the Chinese follow through on restricting nuclear technology sales, Mr. Baker said, "We've taken a major step in the proliferation area which is very significant."

There was a definite chill in the air from the U.S. side as Mr. Bush and Mr. Li posed for pictures in a U.N. conference room.

Mr. Bush was smiling and avoided eye contact during the picture session as he sat across a table from Mr. Li. The Chinese leader wore a tight smile and scanned the room as photographers and reporters filled the room.

Azeris, Armenians battle over Karabakh

BAKU, Azerbaijan (R) — Azeris and Armenians fought in the disputed territory of Nagorno-Karabakh Saturday and an Azeri spokesman said dozens of people had been killed.

The fighting was concentrated around the Azeri stronghold of Shusha where local forces launched a counter-attack against Armenian positions, an Azeri Interior Ministry spokesman said.

"The Armenians were firing on the town of Shusha and on Friday most of them were eliminated in a counter-attack... fighting is still going on," he said.

Four Azeri civilians were killed in the clashes and 63 people were wounded, including 12 members of the country's fledgling National Army, he said.

The Azeri News Agency Assarada said Armenian losses amounted to about 100, but the ministry spokesman could not confirm this. "Maybe 60 were killed, maybe 70, we do not know precisely," he said.

ITAR-TASS News Agency said about 30 Azerbaijanis and four Armenians were killed when local Armenian units launched their own counter-offensive to free two villages in the enclave, administered by Azerbaijan but populated mostly by Armenians.

More than 1,000 people have been killed in four years of fighting over Nagorno-Karabakh, located on the volatile southern fringe of the former Soviet Union.

The past week had seen some of the bloodiest battles yet.

The upsurge in fighting followed the deaths of almost 40 people in a helicopter explosion near Shusha last Tuesday.

Azerbaijani accused Armenian militants of blasting it with a heat-seeking missile, but Armenia says the aircraft was carrying weapons when it exploded in mid-air.

Azeri President Ayaz Mutalibov vowed to hit back against the Armenian militants and an emergency meeting of the country's security council Wednesday called for "decisive measures."

Crowds started gathering in the capital Baku Saturday for a protest rally against what they see as persistent aggression against Azeris living in and around the enclave.

Assarada said Azeri troops were clearing Armenian militants out of areas around Shusha, about 10 kilometres from the regional capital Stepanakert.

Similar military operations were undertaken after a previous helicopter incident in November. On that occasion at least 20 people were killed, including peace negotiators, when the aircraft slammed into a mountain-side. Azerbaijan said the helicopter was shot down but Armenia said it crashed in bad weather.

In the Azeri town of Agdam, on the border with Nagorno-Karabakh, regional leader Musa Mamedov said Azeri villages were being fired on daily.

"Fourteen of them have been completely destroyed and the people have fled," he told Reuters.

Earlier, explosions could be heard in the snow-covered mountains near the village of Shafar, where locals were fleeing their homes in cars for fear of being attacked.

Mr. Mamedov said 38 people were killed in Tuesday's helicopter tragedy.

Shusha itself was under siege, with helicopter pilots refusing to fly there and roads too dangerous to use.

"Food has not been getting through for days. They have received nothing, no water, no electricity, no gas, no bread," Mr. Mamedov said.

Reports from Stepanakert say it is in a similar situation.

U.S. report hails end of communism

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — The annual U.S. government report on human rights hails great progress for democracy and human rights with the fall of communism but cites old and new threats to basic freedoms in several countries.

"In many countries there is now less fear of the knock on the door at midnight than there was as recently as five years ago," said Assistant Secretary of State Richard Schifter in releasing the report Friday.

Mr. Schifter told a news conference the toppling of the statue of Soviet KGB idol Felix Dzerzhinsky, was the event that marked a worldwide swing away from repression. The statue in front of the secret police headquarters was brought down by people opposing the right-wing attempt to overthrow then Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev.

The decline of communism has caused violent conflicts and human rights abuses based on political ideology to decline worldwide, said the 1991 human rights report.

"At the same time, regrettably, we have witnessed an upsurge on all continents of serious armed

clashes and human rights abuses stemming from ethnic and religious differences," Mr. Schifter said in the report's introduction.

He noted that while communism is dead in Eastern Europe, it has survived as an import in China, "where it controls the lives of one-fifth of mankind," and in North Korea, Cuba, Vietnam and Laos.

"Communism is today more a system for the exercise of power by aging ruling elites, which are increasingly out of touch with the thinking of their subjects but still try to use the power which they possess to suppress all independent thought," Mr. Schifter said in the report.

Asked if he was referring to leaders like Chinese Premier Li Peng, who was about to meet in New York with President George Bush as Mr. Schifter briefed reporters, and Cuban leader Fidel Castro, Mr. Schifter said, "Yes."

He said the "very worst" country continues to be North Korea, while the most significant progress has been in sub-Saharan African countries, where 13 governments have adopted democracy.

Column 8

Criminals compensate victims in Dutch experiment

AMSTERDAM (R) — Dutch criminals may get more lenient sentences if they agree to pay damages direct to their victims, the Justice Minister said. In an 18-month experiment in the town of Middelburg, nearly all the victims in more than 200 cases involving theft, vandalism and other crimes chose to receive damages direct, rather than from a state fund. More than half the criminals were willing to pay — and state prosecutors agreed to bear this in mind in sentencing.

Claude Montana leaving Lanvin

PARIS (R) — French fashion house Lanvin has said it had decided to part company with its star designer Claude Montana because he was not willing to devote himself exclusively to its lines. "The logic of fashion creation demands total coherence. We wanted a single stylist for haute couture and ready-to-wear, for men's and women's fashion," Lanvin's President Michel Pietrini told Reuters. "Montana has his own ready-to-wear commitments, so we agreed by mutual consent to part company."

Montana, among the fashion world's most avant-garde stylists, has designed controversial but widely admired haute couture lines for Jeanne Lanvin SA since 1989. His collection of stark but striking outfits, featuring carefully crafted pleats and folds, was one of the highlights of the spring-summer fashion shows in Paris this week.

However, Montana produces his own ready-to-wear lines. He was unwilling to start designing them for Lanvin. Lanvin earlier said in a statement that Montana would leave the economically-troubled fashion house when his contract ran out in October. But Mr. Pietrini said the two parties had agreed to terminate the agreement immediately. Dominique Morlot, former menswear designer for Christian Dior, will take over Lanvin's haute couture and ready-to-wear lines from the beginning of February. Pietrini said.

Crusading prince opens school for architects

LONDON (R) — Britain's Prince Charles, a crusader for a kinder and gentler environment, launched his own school for architects Thursday to put his anti-modernist vision of building design into practice. The 43-year-old heir to the British throne, known for critical outbursts on everything from the motor car to modern medicine, has made architecture one of his pet causes. But he has angered the architectural establishment by accusing designers of creating "Frankenstein monsters" that blot the landscape and are built to live or work in. Aggrieved architects accuse him in turn of living in the past. The Prince of Wales's Institute of Architecture, due to open in London in October, will be partly funded by the prince himself and will promote a respect for more traditional, "people-friendly" buildings, its director Brian Hanson told a news conference announcing the venture. Other financial support for the school, which will offer introductory and post-graduate courses to students from Britain and abroad, will come from charity donations and grants. The prince, writing in a brochure launching the institute, said its aim was to produce sensitive buildings reflecting "the order inherent in the universe."

Writer ousts nurse as bank notes ring the changes

LONDON (R) — The saintly Florence Nightingale, whose nursing system was adopted all over the world, is to be replaced by writer Charles Dickens on Britain's 10-pound note. Nightingale, known as the "Lady of the Lamp" for tending British soldiers in the Crimean War, will be ousted on the new and redesigned note to be first issued on April 29. The next historical figure to be dropped from British bank notes will be Sir Christopher Wren, who designed St. Paul's Cathedral in London. Next year he will be replaced by Sir John Lubbock, the first governor of the Bank of England. But royalists needn't worry. The Bank of England said all new notes will continue to "feature the same portrait of Her Majesty the Queen (Elizabeth) on the front."

Time right to end feud with Russia — Miyazawa

NEW YORK (R) — Japanese Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa said Friday that the timing was great to end decades of feuding when Russian President Boris Yeltsin visits Japan this year.

A beaming Miyazawa triumphantly told reporters, "everything has its own high tide. I can tell that I have just paved the way for getting to work on the most important issue."

In a 40-minute meeting after Friday's summit of the United Nations Security Council, Mr. Yeltsin agreed to visit Japan in September to speed the process towards signing a peace treaty formally ending World War II hostilities between the two.

Japanese officials said Mr. Yeltsin did not ask Mr. Miyazawa for any additional aid in return for a speedy solution to a long-term territorial dispute.

Japan has refused to conclude a peace treaty or offer the former Soviet Union large-scale aid until Moscow returns four islands north of Japan which were occupied by Soviet forces in the closing days of World War II.

"It was a satisfactory meeting in that we were able to set the timing (for Mr. Yeltsin's visit) and the territorial issue was brought up by Yeltsin," one official said.

Mr. Miyazawa said Japan and Russia had had enough of the stalemate, and that major industrial powers wanted a swift way out.

"I have discussed it with Mr. (George) Bush, and I'm sure Mr. Yeltsin has a lot of ideas," he said.

Mr. Miyazawa said he saw progress in the fact that Moscow and Tokyo had a schedule to discuss the dispute over the islands, known in Japan as the Northern Territories and in Russia as the Kuriles.

"We have arrived at the point where (Tokyo and Moscow) can no longer put off negotiations on the Northern Territories problem," he told Japanese reporters.

Mr. Yeltsin told Mr. Miyazawa that Russia would face a severe shortage of food in the winter, Japanese officials said.

Decontrolled prices and other drastic economic reforms had caused hyper-inflation in Russia, but such changes should be implemented now, the officials quoted Mr. Yeltsin as telling Mr. Miyazawa.

"I realise this is the last chance (for economic reform). If I failed, conservative and totalitarian leaders would replace me and Russia would return to the old regime," Mr. Yeltsin was quoted as saying.

Russia and other former Soviet republics are thirsty for Japanese cash and technology to boost their ailing economies.

The United States, which has provided emergency aid and export credits to expedite supplies of food and medicine to the former Soviet Union, has said it will support Japan's stand on aid to Russia.

Tokyo wanted to invite Mr. Yeltsin to visit Japan before a summer summit.

WORLD NEWS IN BRIEF

Yeutter becomes top Bush adviser

WASHINGTON (AP) — President George Bush has named Republican Party Chairman Clayton Yeutter his domestic policy chief and said he wants political consultant Richard Bond to succeed Mr. Yeutter as head of the party. Meanwhile, Vice President Dan Quayle predicted none of those now running will win the Democratic presidential nomination and that it will go instead to New York Gov. Mario Cuomo. "I just have a hunch that Mario may be the man," Mr. Quayle told reporters earlier at the winter meeting of the Republican National Committee. Mr. Bush announced Mr. Yeutter's appointment while addressing the Republican meeting Friday night. "Obviously it's a very challenging assignment because domestic policy will be such a major dimension of the political scene over the next eight months," Mr. Yeutter said in an interview. He said he expected to be on the job in two or three weeks.

Ukraine votes for transitional army

KIEV (R) — Ukraine's parliament has voted to set up a transitional army as the newly-independent republic's row with Russia over the Black Sea Fleet resurfaced. President Leonid Kravchuk demanded the sacking of fleet commander Admiral Igor Kasatonov. A naval official in Moscow said the request was being examined but there were no grounds for removing Adm. Kasatonov at present. Russia, dominant partner in the 11-nation Commonwealth of former Soviet republics, says the fleet is a strategic force and thus remains under Commonwealth command. Ukraine lays claim to the bulk of the force. The presidents of the new grouping are due to meet in Minsk on Feb. 14 to tackle their military differences. The Ukrainian parliament voted almost unanimously to approve the first reading of a bill to set up an independent armed forces for the republic of 53 million people. The bill abolishes the rank of marshal and cuts military service to 18 months from 24 in the army and to 24 months from 36 for sailors.

De Klerk arrives in Britain

LONDON (R) — South African President F.W. De Klerk arrived in Britain Saturday on the first leg of a six-nation European tour including state visits to three former East Bloc countries. Mr. De Klerk, whose plane was delayed by fog in England, was scheduled to hold talks with British Prime Minister John Major and the two men were expected to attend an International Rugby Union match in the afternoon. The plan to be seen together at a sporting event prompted protests Friday by members of parliament and a British anti-apartheid group, which planned a demonstration outside the rugby ground at Twickenham in west London. British officials said Mr. Major and the president, who paid an official visit to Britain last April, would discuss progress in dismantling apartheid in South Africa and the transformation of the country into a non-racial democracy.

Russian troops to leave Lithuania

MOSCOW (AP) — Russia has agreed to start withdrawing former Soviet troops from Lithuania this month, and will discuss handing over some weapons and ammunition to the Baltic country, the two sides said Saturday. Lithuanian and Russian negotiators announced the agreement following talks Friday in Vilnius, the Lithuanian capital. Similar negotiations were to begin Saturday in neighbouring Latvia. "Agreement was reached on starting the pullout of military units from the territory of the Lithuanian Republic in February 1992," a communiqué said. The announcement did not say when the withdrawal would be completed. Technical experts will meet Feb. 10 to complete details, said Lithuanian parliament spokesman Arune Kontautaitis. "The pullout will take time. It's not going to be a quick process," Mr. Kontautaitis said by telephone.

Alleged Tyson victim stands by story

INDIANAPOLIS (R) — An 18-year-old beauty pageant hopeful who has accused boxing great Mike Tyson of raping her stood by her story as she withstood more than three hours of cross-examination. The alleged victim Thursday described in graphic detail how Tyson surprised her when she came out of a hotel bathroom and found him sitting on the edge of his bed wearing only his underwear. She said Tyson then forced her down on the bed, laughed, and savagely raped her. The college student, dressed in an elegant peacock-blue two-piece suit with a flowing jacket gently flaring from her waist, responded with apparent candor Friday to defence attorney Vincent Fuller's often detailed questions. Tyson, who could forever lose the chance to regain his title if he is convicted, and could be jailed for up to 63 years, says the woman agreed to have sex with him. During Friday afternoon's session a number of witnesses testified that Tyson and the woman arrived at the Indianapolis hotel in the early hours of July 19, 1991. The alleged victim was at the time a contestant in the Miss Black America Beauty Contest.

Genscher: CSCE to admit Croatia, Slovenia

BONN (R) — German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher said Friday he expected European Union security forum to admit Croatia and Slovenia as full members soon.

Mr. Genscher, speaking from Prague, told German radio the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) should discuss admitting both former Yugoslav states at its next meeting in Helsinki in March.

"I expect that full admission will happen very quickly," Mr. Genscher said. "In any case Germany will press for (the CSCE) to deal with this question again when we meet in Helsinki in March. And I hope that then all the objections can be overcome."

Mr. Genscher was in Prague for a meeting of the CSCE which groups European states with the United States and Russia and has just admitted 10 former Soviet Republics, swelling its membership to 48.

Croatia and Slovenia were granted observer status at the conference. Germany led the move to recognise the two breakaway Yugoslav republics. The European Community recognised their independence earlier this month.

Burma, Bangladesh face off on border

ON THE BURMA-BANGLADESH BORDER (AP) — Two of the world's poorest nations have massed 90,000 soldiers on their remote frontier, where fleeing Muslims speak of a pogrom and insurgents vow to fight the Burmese regime.

Bangladesh officials are trying to determine why Burma, a generally friendly neighbour, sent a raiding party across the border in December and bolstered its frontier forces out of proportion to any threat.

Burma's military government, one of the most secretive and repressive in the world, has said little beyond asserting that its reason for reinforcing the 280-kilometre border was to contain Muslim separatist rebels in Arakan state.

Some analysts believe the attack was meant to warn Bangladesh, a predominantly Muslim nation, not to support the insurgents.

Others say the Rangoon regime, which brutally put down a pro-democracy movement in 1988, may be trying to divert public attention by manufacturing an external threat and playing on Buddhist prejudice against Muslims.

"They have exhausted all the internal means to distract the people from the country's problems, so now they have to invent another tactic," Mohammad Yunus, a Muslim insurgent leader, said in an interview. "They have selected Bangladesh, while the Rohingyas (Arakan Muslims) are the scapegoats."

"They can kill two birds with one stone: Rid themselves of the Rohingyas and divert the attention of the people."

In an interview published Thursday by the independent English-language Daily Star, Burma's ambassador to Bangladesh, Soe Myint, said the two nations "have no intention to fight each other."

Three rounds of military talks have been held. After the last one, on Thursday, Bangladeshi officials said Burma refused to withdraw its troops from the border.

Ambassador Soe Myint said his country agreed in principle to repatriate the Muslims who fled to Bangladesh, except for insurgents.

Sheikh Razzak Ali, speaker of the Bangladesh parliament, said lawmakers would take up the questions of refugees and relations with Burma Monday.

At least 76,000 people have fled Arakan state to southeastern Bangladesh, claiming Burmese troops are razing villages, taking men away for forced labour and raping women in a campaign calculated to drive all Muslims out.

With average per capita incomes of about \$200, neither country can afford a war. Burma is rich in resources, but has mismanaged its economy for decades. Bangladesh is beset by overpopulation, limited resources and natural calamities.

The crisis began Dec. 21, when a Burmese patrol attacked a Bangladesh border post, killing

two soldiers and wounding 22. Both sides brought in reinforcements.

"We are on full alert since they have deployed a handsome number of troops on the other side," Capt. Mohammad Jaki said at a front-line position of the Bangladesh Rifles. "See that Burmese outpost? My men could take that in half an hour if we got the orders."

Bangladesh might have trouble with Burma's armed forces, which number 230,000 and have been tested in decades of anti-insurgency warfare. Bangladesh fields only 103,000 troops, but enjoys superior naval and air power and has shorter supply lines than the Burmese.

About 35,000 Bangladeshi soldiers are in the border region, including those normally stationed there to combat a tribal insurgency in the Chittagang Hills.

Soviet-built MiG jet fighters were seen in an apparent state of readiness at the airbase in Chittagang, and flying low over the border region daily.

Burma has 55,000 soldiers on the frontier, according to Bangladeshi estimates. Reports say the Burmese have reactivated a World War II airfield, built five helicopter pads, built bunkers and dug trenches.

Rangoon has long tried to destroy a dozen guerrilla groups fighting in the border area for greater autonomy or independence for Arakan. They include Muslim rebels of the Rohingyas solidarity organisation and the

Arakanese Rohingya Islamic Front, as well as Buddhist groups like the Arakan Army.

In eastern and northern Burma, the army is kept busy by strong ethnic rebel groups such as the Karen and Kachin.

So far, the Arakan guerrillas have proved ineffective, although they receive some financial aid and have been allowed to set up camps inside Bangladesh. Exiled Burmese Muslims in the Middle East are a prime source of funds.

Mr. Yunus, president of Rohingya Solidarity, claims to have 1,500 fighters, some armed with weapons either captured or bought from Cambodian guerrillas along the Thai-Cambodian border.

Khine Saw Tun of the Democratic Alliance of Burma said, however, that the six largest guerrilla groups total only 250 men under arms. He was in the border region seeking cooperation with the Muslims on behalf of the alliance, a coalition of forces based on the Thai-Burmese border.

Enayetullah Khan, a newspaper editor and former Bangladeshi ambassador to Burma, said of the Burmese deployment: "Sending three divisions to the border is totally disproportionate to the threat. It's a do-or-die attempt to rid Arakan of so-called mixed-race people."

He described the December raid as an attempt to bully Bangladesh into being docile while the Burmese army cleans out the insurgents and expels the Arakan Muslims.